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AUTHOR Lonergan, Jack
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ABSTRACT

A practical guide for language teachers illustrates the different ways in which cameras can be employed in language work, with suggestions and advice taken from current experience. Teachers can be involved by making their own language training videotapes and focusing on an area of language, literature, or thematic interest directly applicable to the learners' needs. Chapters cover the following topics: (1) first steps with the camera (e.g., equipment, talking heads, short presentations); (2) recording pairs and groups (e.g., lighting and sound, close-ups, topics, communicative function); (3) sketches, role plays, and simulations; (4) evaluating learners' performance (e.g., teacher and learner role, student projects such as advertisements or news reports, language teaching materials); and (6) titles, captions, and editing. Examples and techniques are described throughout. A glossary is included. Contains 5 references. (LB)

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Technology in Language Learnin

Making the Most of Your Video Camera

by Jack Lonergan

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TECHNOLOGY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING
(*Series editor* Brian Hill)

Making the most of your video camera

Jack Lonergan

3

In memory of Marie-Odile Daulton

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INTRODUCTION

Making the most of your video camera is intended as a practical guide for teachers of any language who want to enhance language learning by using a video camera. Its main themes illustrate the different ways in which cameras can be employed, with suggestions and advice taken from current experience. There is also a guide to the technical aspects of video recording equipment, a glossary of specialist terms, and suggestions for further reading. The whole book should serve as a useful reference manual and resource for teachers involved at any level of language training.

An exciting aspect of learning a foreign language today is the acquisition of a new set of communication skills in the target language. Not only are new words and sentence patterns learned, they are coupled with cultural insights, with different gestures and body language, and with different degrees of social appropriacy of language in various contexts. For example, the slow hand-clapping of Russian concertgoers is complimentary, whereas in Britain it is derogatory; the terminology for the extended family differs in Urdu from English. Similarly, the gestures for *yes* in Greek or Bulgarian can confuse the monoglot speaker of English, while the floweriness of language used in routine French office correspondence is not appropriate in English.

Television programmes in the target language can present all this information in an interesting and entertaining way. Making video recordings of language learners and playing their communicative performance back to them for analysis and evaluation stimulates and interests language learners in a related way. It allows them to see themselves operating in the new environment of the target language, offering an overview of their use of language which goes beyond just words and sentences. It incidentally provides a useful record of their achievement of a series of communicative objectives. Further, video recordings can equally well form the basis of inter-school exchanges of video newsletters.

But video cameras can be used for more than just exploiting recordings of the learners. The learners can gain additional language practice by making their own programmes or vignettes, using the target language as their working language. As they go about their own production, so they use language. Deciding on the script, discussing the props necessary; giving instructions to the actors or to the camera operator; speaking the lines - all of these are stimulating and rewarding activities in the target language, leading to the proud world premiere of the group's project.

Teachers too can be involved in projects, by making their own language training video tapes. Materials designed by teachers have an immediacy and relevance to the learning situation unmatched by commercially produced language programmes or broadcast television. The teacher can focus exactly on an area of language, of literature, of thematic or local interest directly applicable to the learners' needs.

These approaches are explained in detail in the first five chapters of this book.

It is worth noting here, however, that language levels and target language are not the point of departure in considering whether to use video cameras in language teaching. As far as language levels are concerned, we can compare beginners and advanced business learners.

Beginners can be recorded in very short scenes, such as greetings and introductions.

The language used is likely to be formulaic: *How do you do? Как Вас зовут? (Kak vas zovut?) Darf ich Ihnen....vorstellen? Enchanté!*

In one sense, this is easy to learn. But the correct delivery involves not only saying the words with a suitable pronunciation, but also using the correct gestures - do we shake hands, do we bow, do we kiss? - as well as, for speakers of English, an immediate introduction to the complexities of expressing *you* in other languages: social appropriacy of language.

At a higher level of competence, learners may be role-playing a negotiation exercise. Here more advanced features of language usage come into play, extending the analysis of the communication beyond the words spoken. How do we interrupt - raise a finger and wait, or blurt out our comments to stop the speaker? At what level of politeness shall we pitch our disagreement? And how do we interpret our colleague's apparently deprecatory shrugs at everything we say? We can see that although the language levels differ, there is also a parallel system of analysis of how the language is used which also needs to be used. Learners may be quite proficient in using a small segment of language: skilled practitioners of a restricted amount of language are common in the hotel and tourist industries. Indeed, some advanced users of a language for reading purposes revert to virtual beginners when asked to use the language socially.

Considering the target language, there will be ever present problems met by every learner in the class. Native tongue interference will impede progress in pronunciation, fluency in using strange case endings and agreements, and probably syntactic arrangements as well. The internal structure of the target language will throw up its own inconsistencies and special difficulties, such as aspects, reflexive systems, or verbs of motion and state. But communicative syllabuses, where common performance objectives are shared by a variety of target languages, offer us the chance of recording and evaluating learners' competence in realistic situations. Today, the performance objectives measured by GCSE examinations, by degree finals, or by special papers for commercial, military or diplomatic purposes have a great deal in common - and are spread across the widest possible range of languages.

A further point to be stressed here concerns the ease of working with video. Clearly, the technology involves cables to connect and buttons to push if things are to work satisfactorily. However, the type of video hardware used in most schools is designed for ease of use. Other domestic appliances, such as car audio systems, washing programmes, knitting machines or microwave ovens use similar microchip technology, and may appear equally daunting to the first-time user. But in fact, there is little to go wrong which common sense cannot repair. If there is a breakdown in the equipment, then only specialists can repair cameras and recorders, in the same way that only specialists open up microwave ovens or car cassette players.

Technical matters involved in the everyday use of video recorders are dealt with in Chapter 6; it should serve as a reference section when you are using the equipment.

The chapter also contains technical descriptions of the various pieces of equipment involved, and is intended as a briefing guide for teachers who want to know about specifications and the jargon of the business. This should help in discussions with technicians or sales staff, or when considering the use or purchase of equipment. The glossary and suggestions for further reading are added as appendices.

Finally, a word about the constraints and pleasures of working with a video camera. One thing to bear in mind is that for students there is no magical leap in ability merely because they are recorded and can watch themselves on screen. When recording

learners' performances, there is not only the necessary preparation for what is recorded, but also the need to structure the evaluation session so that the students get the maximum benefit from it (see below, Chapter 4).

Similarly, video recordings should not dominate the language learning curriculum. A video camera is an additional educational resource: very useful but to be used in moderation as one item in the overall package of resources used to facilitate language learning. We can look ahead, however, to a time when every language classroom has a camera permanently installed, ready for the instant recording of anything that might spontaneously crop up - offering the action replay of effective language learning. The immense advantage of all types of video recordings which we make with our learners is their immediacy, their relevance.

If we record our own students, then they see themselves within the peer group, and can mutually laugh, cajole, admire - and learn.

If teachers make their own teaching materials, then they will be directly related to what the students need.

If our students make their own video projects, then the playback time - the climax of the project - is a celebration for all, teachers and class, of their talent and achievement. In all these cases, of course, there is no worry about copyright; it is all your own material.

To sum up, here are some of the main features and advantages of using a video camera in language work:

- it is motivating for learners and teachers alike
- it is suitable with any age group: young learners are especially keen to use the equipment
- it is suitable for all levels of ability
- it brings language learning to life and provides experiences of 'total communication'
- it is a learning experience which integrates the four skills
- it adds the dimensions of gesture and appropriacy to the four skills
- it is possible to simulate a wide range of communicative activities
- camera work stimulates learners to imaginative and creative uses of language and communication skills
- television is seen as a catalyst where the process is as important as the end result
- students need no special training and television is demythologised

So: Make the most of your video camera - and good luck, good teaching and good learning!

CHAPTER 1

First steps with the camera

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the first steps to be taken in recording language learners using their communicative skills. The techniques explained show how to make simple recordings of individual students, but it is worth stating here the classroom *benefits in general* that video recordings of the learners bring.

There is a great variety of very valuable aids to language learning, such as cue cards, simulations, overhead transparencies, listening centres, television and radio broadcasts, or computers. Each has a valid contribution to make, and the experienced teacher will employ a judicious mix of what is available in order to promote the best climate for language learning. However, only video really offers the students the opportunity of seeing, hearing and analysing their performance in the target language, all at the same time.

Through the recording, the learners and teacher can see the totality of the communicative situation, as created for the recording. That is to say, the learner(s) will be speaking and behaving in a given situation, with a specific setting and with conversation partners identifiable by role. The roles may also affect communication, in that factors such as age, dress, status, sex, gestures, emotions, or pyschological disposition can each affect what is said and how it is said. All of this can be made apparent in the recording.

The benefit for the learner is that language is seen to be part of the whole process of communication. The evaluation of the learner's performance can take this into account, giving feedback on communicative ability, and not just on the correctness of elements of language.

In Chapter 4 this discourse level of approach to language correction is discussed more fully.

First encounters

First attempts to use a video camera can provide a lot of fun, for teacher and class, more especially if the learners have not seen themselves on a television screen before. Most teachers can remember their own first audio recording - and perhaps the disbelief they experienced at the sound of their own voices. In this age of television, learners are not so shocked at seeing themselves on television, but there are nevertheless elements of surprise, enjoyment, and often laughter. This can be used to advantage in the following way:

- the students line up at one side of the camera
- the first student gets ready in front of the camera
- the camera is switched on and recording starts (see Chapter 6)
- each student speaks to camera for a few moments, then moves aside to allow the next in line to speak (see Fig 1)
- this continues until all the class have spoken to camera

- stop recording, rewind the tape, and play the recording back for the enjoyment of everyone.

A few students may show reluctance to take part in these first exercises, perhaps because of shyness, a lack of self-confidence, misplaced fear, or just general antipathy. There is no need to force them to take part until they feel ready and able to. A halt to recording can be called by you under some pretext to avoid any confrontation; or the learners can be given a task behind the scenes. In many sketches (see Chapter 3) there are walk-on non-speaking parts, which are a good introduction to recordings for shy learners. But most learners are happy and willing to take part as soon as the video fun begins.

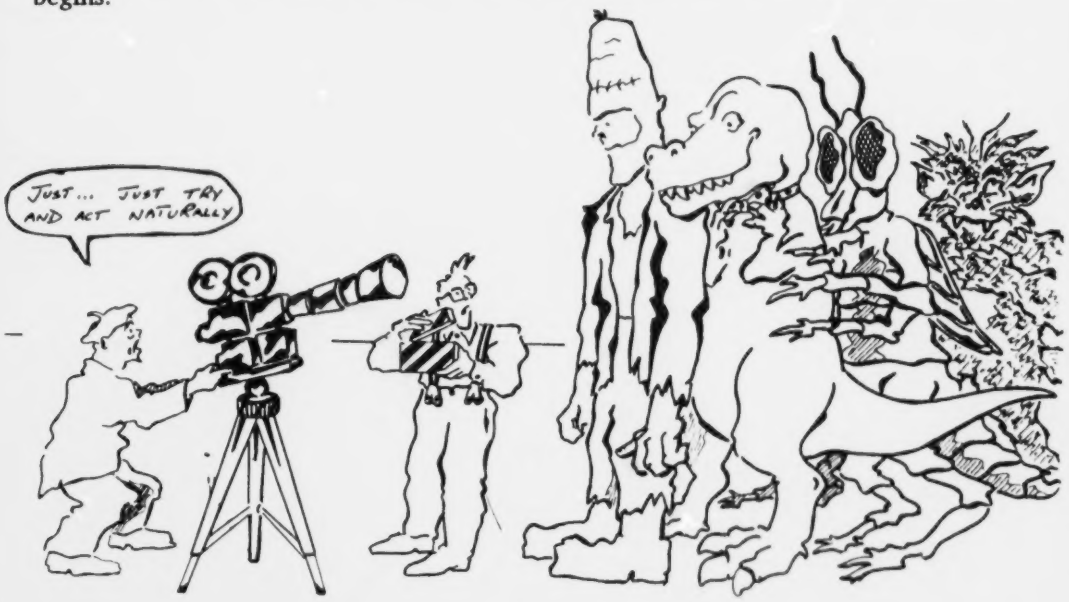

Fig. 1

At this level, the learners need say very little - just a few words about themselves, depending on their level and ability. For example:

Beginner:	*Hello. My name is Pete and I learn English. I am very happy. Goodbye.*
Elementary :	*Bonjour! Je m'appelle Marie. J'ai onze ans. J'ai un frére et une soeur. Chez nous il y a un chat. J'aime le chat beaucoup - il s'appelle Tibby.*
Intermediate:	Здрассте! Меня зовут Мария бэст. Я англичанка и думаю, что мне очень трудно говорить по русски. Я работаю в лондоне - я телефонистка. Я люблю, работу а предпочитаю кино.
Advanced:	*Guten Tag. Mein Name ist Gordon Wilson und ich bin Schiffahrtsabteilungsleiter bei der Firma N. Ich beschäftige mich*

hauptsächlich mit drei Arbeitsaufgaben, und zwar Zollabfertigungen, Logistik, und Reklamationen.

The primary objective of this exercise is to familiarise the students with the medium, to relax them, and to take the first steps in making them aware that the video camera can be a useful resource.

These first playback sessions will also make the teacher and the learners aware of the need for empathy, and indeed trust where possible.

Equipment

There is a wide choice of types of equipment which you may use, which includes camcorders, video cameras with portable recorders run on batteries, recorders and cameras working from the mains, and so on. These are explained in detail in Chapter 6, which you may care to refer to now.

For the purposes of this section, the assumed equipment is shown in Fig 2: a television, a video recorder, and a camera and microphone, all working from the mains electricity.

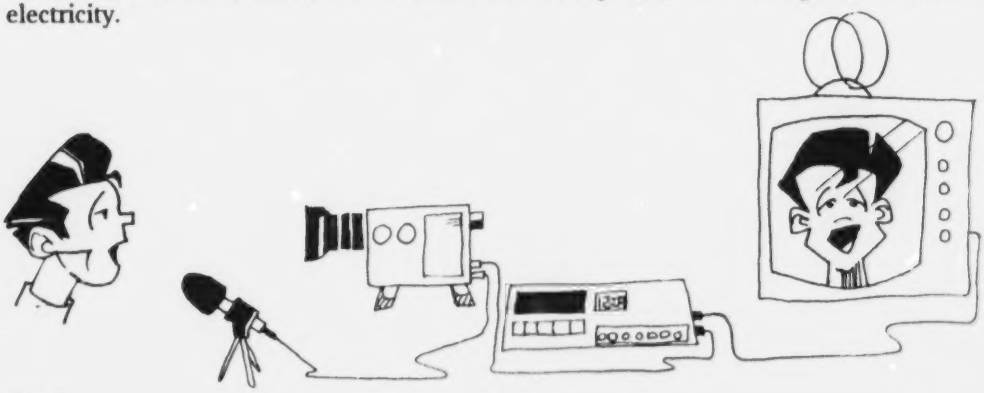

Fig. 2

A talking head

After the initial introduction to the camera, students can produce short talks or presentations. The term *a talking head* describes what is probably the simplest video recording technique there is. Yet though simple, it is widely used and very effective.

In essence, the camera stays still, and records one speaker. During the speaker's presentation, the camera may move in closer to the speaker's face, so that at the climax of the speech the viewer sees the speaker in close-up. There are many examples of talking heads in professional broadcasting, encompassing a range of activities. News items, on-the-spot reports, weather forecasts, political broadcasts, appeals for charity, storytelling, poetry reading, singing, religious programmes and advertisements all use the technique.

For the teacher this technique combines ease of achievement and usefulness. For the teacher and learner, it offers immediate feedback.

There are three main factors to consider when making a video recording:

- the quality of the sound;
- the level of lighting;
- operating the camera to make an interesting recording.

For many classroom recording sessions, these factors can be kept as simple as possible.

The quality of the sound

Good quality sound recording and reproduction is very important, as the words spoken are one of the key parts of the overall communication.

The key to good sound is a good microphone, placed in the correct position: near the speaker.

Almost all cameras have a microphone attached to them, built-in as part of the camera. However, using this microphone has drawbacks. The speaker is likely to be several metres away, so any other noises from that distance in the room will be recorded at the same time. Further, the camera operator is right next to the microphone, so any noises made will drown out the speaker. The built-in camera also picks up any noises made by the camera itself in operation, such as clicks or a whirring motor.

For these reasons an extension microphone is preferable. This is connected to the camera (or sometimes to the video recorder: see Chapter 6), and automatically overrides the built-in microphone. An easy way of supporting an extension microphone is on a purpose-built stand, so that the microphone is on a table near the speakers. If the microphone is on the same table as the speakers, it picks up any tapping noises made. Suspending a microphone is preferable, either from a boom or from an overhead hook. Few schools will have the luxury of lapel microphones. Once the microphone is in position and working, there is nothing further to do about the sound.

The level of lighting

Video cameras are designed to work in natural light - sunshine, normal daylight, dawn or twilight - and with artificial light - such as household or classroom lights. On most cameras there is a switch with which to choose natural light or artificial light (see Chapter 6). There is no need for special lighting for most purposes.

With the speaker in a well-lit position, check that there are no obvious intrusions, such as shadows across the face, glinting reflections from spectacles, or glaring sunlight from behind the speaker directly into the camera.

Once the position has been chosen, there is nothing further to do about the lighting.

Operating the camera: zoom, focus and tilt

One aspect of operating a camera is essential, no matter how simple or complicated the project: the subject needs to be in focus.

Looking through a camera viewfinder, or watching what is being recorded on a television monitor, can be very deceptive. Faces which appear in focus at a distance may not be as well focused as they should be. The focus should be set when the camera is in close-up on the speaker or subject, rather than from afar. Many cameras have an automatic focus, but it is worth understanding the effects of manual focusing. So check that the camera control for focus is switched to manual, and proceed as follows:

- Zoom-in — Get as close as possible to the speaker (Fig 3a)
- Focus — Use the manual focus ring (Fig 3b)
- Zoom-out — Note that the speaker stays in focus (Fig 3c)

3a

3b

3c

Fig. 3

If, after the focus has been set, the subject remains at the same distance from the camera, then the focus will always be correct, whether the camera is used to take a close-up shot or a long-distance shot. Of course, if the subject moves around - and the distance from lens to subject varies - then the focus must be changed too. This requires some practice, if not a little skill, and for this reason an automatic focus is very useful. Whatever the lens is aimed at will automatically be put into correct focus (see Chapter 6 for guidance on recording titles, credits and other visual inserts).

Similarly, there is a choice when operating the zoom facility. The controls marked T and W stand for 'in and out'; that is, T = telephoto (the camera zooms in), W = wide angle (the camera zooms out). Using these controls produces a well-controlled and even movement at a uniform speed; there may be annoying motor noise if the built-in microphone is used. Operating the zoom by hand gives freedom of speed, and the

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movement is silent. However, first attempts may be jerky if the operator is unpractised, rather as operating a clutch on a car.

The other main camera operation that is needed is used in conjunction with the zoom-in movement. Fig 4a shows the effect of zooming in on a speaker and making no other camera movements: the subject's head disappears off the top of the screen. To stop this, the camera needs to be tilted up slightly as the zoom-in movement takes place. Fig 4b shows how the speaker's head remains in a constant position on the screen. If there is a zoom-out from the close-up position, then the camera needs to be tilted down correspondingly. As a rule of thumb, the eyes should be kept one third of the way down the screen.

Fig. 4a

4b

A useful practice activity for teachers new to camera operation is to practise this sequence of camera movements, deliberately upsetting the focus setting at the end of the exercise:

ZOOM IN - FOCUS - ZOOM OUT - ZOOM IN slowly, TILTING UP - ZOOM OUT, TILTING DOWN

Structuring short presentations

The four quotes at the beginning of the chapter - learners at various levels introducing themselves - illustrate an excellent way for the students' first acquaintance with the camera and for relaxing the class. With other talks, a structure to the presentation is most useful, even if the learner is at an elementary stage.

Asking learners to present what they have to say in three parts brings with it several bonuses. Firstly, most students can - or can be prompted to - think of three things about any topic. Even at a basic level of competence, learners can name three things which they like or enjoy, with a reason for each:

> *My name is Richard, and I like travel, tennis and red wine. I like travel because I meet interesting people. I like tennis because it is good fun - and I meet some interesting people too. And I like red wine because it tastes nice.*

Secondly, the logical structure also implies linguistic structuring: from an early stage, learners are aware of the usefulness of linking words and internal references. For example, in any language it is necessary to connect ideas. In this partisan piece, the

simple sentences provide the facts. But the presentation is given coherence by the various connectives used: *firstly, however...also, lastly.*

> *I am going to talk to you about Yorkshire, and mention three important things. They are the coal mines, the dales, and the cricket team. Firstly, the coal mines, or the pits as we call them. Yorkshire has always produced the best coal in the country, and there are many pit villages in Yorkshire. However, there is also beautiful unspoilt countryside - the Yorkshire dales. They are completely different from the pit villages, but very easy to get to. Lastly, throughout Yorkshire, in pit villages and in the dales, Yorkshire folk are united in the belief that we have the very best cricket team in the country. We don't always win, but we know we're the best.*

As students extend their ability to say more complicated things, so too will their use of such connectives be extended, to include such phrases as

> *I'd like now to pick up on a point I made earlier*
> *There is another side to this which I also want to explain*
> *On the other hand*
> *So to sum up, what I have tried to say is...*

The third advantage is that a foreknowledge of the structure of the talk helps the video recording greatly. The movements of the camera, from zoom-out to close-up, can be matched with the contents of the presentation:

- start the recording from a zoom-out position, as in Fig 3c above;
- when the speaker has introduced the topic, move in a little for the first point;
- move in again as the second point is made, remembering to tilt up;
- zoom right in and tilt up for a close-up as the speaker gets to the climax of the presentation.

By watching actual examples on television, it is easy to appreciate how effective these simple techniques can be.

Topics for short presentations

Almost any topic can be chosen for a short presentation: own's home town or area; favourite foods; pastimes; sport; current events, and so on. Finding the content for a short talk is less of a problem than the actual presentation itself. Just as the threefold structuring described above is useful for cohesion, so also is a consideration of the purposes of the communication. In this way, the learners can be made aware of the different features of language associated with, for example, description, narration, reminiscence (description - rather than narration - of the past), or instruction.

In English, these discourse functions can be easily distinguished by, for example, the verb forms used:

Description	present simple (lives, works, does not smoke, is married) present perfect (hasn't been to, has been chosen) modals (can play, can't cook, ought to stop)

	will future (will pass, if..., will do it if he can)
Narration	simple past (arrived, looked at, was opened) past continuous (was smiling, was being prepared) past perfect (had left, had been sold)
Reminiscence	simple past (lived, played, was taken) *used to* past (used to visit, used to be entertained) *would* past (would stay out)
Instruction	imperative (open, close, do remember to..., do not touch) the use of *you* (you take this, and then you put it here)

Other languages will present a different set of language features, according to what is said. Whereas the difference between the simple past and present perfect in English is one of discourse function, in German it is a contrast between mode of expression - whether written or spoken language. Written instructions in German may appear to be in the infinitive forms only.

French will pose the choice of *avoir* or *être* when speaking about the past, together with a difficult system of agreements, or word order problems posed by the use of pronouns.

Russian, on the other hand, presents the ease of subject-verb agreements in the past with the complexities of the verbs of motion, as well as the daunting use of aspects, or prefixes, infixes and suffixes.

In more general terms, all languages will share certain features: for example, the need for sequencing words in instructions. In considering the following list of suggestions, therefore, consideration should be given to more than just the content. Identify for the learners what elements of language are best suited to express the underlying communicative ideas. This is particularly useful when giving the evaluation and feedback, which is discussed in Chapter 3. The suggestions in this first group are all suitable for presentation structured in three phases.

Description	Where I live; My hometown; My country My family; My house; My friends; My favourite person Hobbies; Sport; Pastimes; Activities Likes and Dislikes; Pet hates; Food and drink A famous building/place/person My job; My company; Our major products
Speculation	Three wishes If I could travel...; If I had 1,000,000 FF; If I ruled the world If I was a girl/boy; If I was an adult; If I were young again

These suggestions place an emphasis on the correct sequence of ideas.

Instruction	How to play a video game; How to set up a computer programme How to get around on the metro; How to buy a bus ticket How to make a telephone call (in Italy, with a phone card; from a hotel room)

	How to operate a microwave oven/dishwasher/video recorder How to make double-sided photocopies on A4 from A3 originals How to install our new components
Narration	My week; My day; My life; My happiest birthday My best holiday; My worst holiday The most frightening/exciting time of my life My greatest success; My most embarrassing moment
Process	How paper/glass is recycled; How acid rain is formed How a hovercraft flies; How hurricanes develop How our new engineering/computing/cooling system functions

Other types of presentation have their own structure, which can vary from example to example:

Songs; Poems; Jingles; Recitative
Advertisements; Announcements
Appeals: charity, religion, health, ecology, politics, neighbourhood schemes

Students will contribute their own ideas. At the beginners' level this can be very useful, as the learners will be keen to know in the target language the strange words and expressions which they need to convey their own thoughts. Selecting these vocabulary items for themselves greatly increases the likelihood that the new words will be learned and remembered, compared with prescribed forms only. For most students, it is not the individual lexical items which cause problems in communication, but their use in a specific context. The structure words and associated syntactic features can cause much more difficulty, but can be practised within these and similar frameworks.

CHAPTER 2

Recording pairs and groups

Recording discussions between pairs or small groups is essentially the same as recording a talking head, as long as the participants remain in the one place. If they move around, as required by a playlet or sketch, then there are other considerations which are dealt with later in this chapter.

The most significant difference lies in the fact that the camera will not stay on one person all the time, as with a talking head. And if the discussion lasts beyond a few minutes, then the camera will focus on different participants during the discussion.

Lighting and sound

With a stationary small group, the lighting and the sound present no major problems. Proceed as for a talking head, but check the position of the microphone more carefully. When there is more than one speaker, modern microphones automatically adjust their recording level to the strength of the voice picked up. If one of the group has a stronger voice than the others, place the microphone rather nearer the others, so that this speaker's voice does not dominate.

The choice of microphone often lies outside the influence of the language teacher. Nevertheless, a few points of good practice should be observed. Microphones are sensitive. If they are placed on a table, on which there is a drumming of fingers or tapping of pens, then the recording will pick this up, perhaps obscuring the speech. Where possible, the microphone should be insulated from the table surface. This is done usually in one of three ways: place the microphone on a pile of books; place the microphone on an adjacent table; or suspend the microphone overhead. This last is the best solution.

Fig. 5

Microphones also differ in how they record. Most language teaching institutions will be restricted to basic choices: stereo or mono, and unidirectional or omnidirectional.

An omnidirectional microphone will pick up sound from anywhere in its vicinity, whereas unidirectional microphones receive their input from one direction only - in an imaginary beam emanating from the end.

A mono microphone records one sound track only: all the speakers need to be near it. A stereo microphone can record on two channels. However, many video recorders do not have two channels, so that each 'half' of the stereo microphone received is recorded

on the same track. This has the advantage that half the microphone can be in front of some participants, and half in front of others (see Fig 5).

There are two ways of checking the quality of the sound. The preferred method for many users of video is to record for a few moments, then play that recording back on the television monitor, and so check the quality of the sound.

Professionals usually monitor the sound as they record, by listening in on a pair of headphones used specifically for that purpose. This is the most convenient way of checking, and is to be recommended when recording away from the classroom. But it is not essential, especially if there are budget constraints on equipment or maintenance.

Operating the camera: pan and tilt

Having more than one speaker to record means that the camera needs an additional operation.

6a

6b

6c

Fig. 6

The first step is to seat the two or more participants so that they are all the same distance from the camera. This will preserve the good focus on each person, as well as on the whole group. Proceed with the Zoom In - Focus - Zoom Out routine described above to focus on a talking head. The group of say three should now be in focus, as in Fig 6a.

To zoom-in on the centre person (as in Fig 6b) is now easy: operate the zoom control and remember to tilt up. However, zooming-in on the girl on the left requires an additional camera movement: it must be panned to the left. To go from the full view

of the group (Fig 6a) to a close-up of this participant (Fig 6c) requires the following camera operations:

ZOOM IN and PAN LEFT and TILT UP

To return to the full group (Fig 6a) requires the reverse operation:

ZOOM OUT and PAN RIGHT and TILT DOWN

Close-ups of the participants

During a group discussion, it is clear that the behaviour and the speech of the participants is the focus of attention. Two things need to be said about choosing which participant to watch - one technical, and the other to do with communication.

As far as communication is concerned, there is no need to succumb to the temptation to always record whoever happens to be speaking. This is for two reasons.

Firstly, it can be very difficult to do. If there are lively exchanges, then the camera operator cannot anticipate who will interrupt, disagree, or take the floor. As it is difficult, it is as well avoided.

However, more importantly, it is not always the most worthwhile or valuable thing to record. It is often the case that the reactions of the listeners are far more revealing than an image of the speaker. The sound is being recorded all the time, so if there are reaction shots, and the speaker is known, then the viewers can experience not only the force of the message, but also its effect on the audience. This effect may range from rapture to absolute disagreement or total boredom.

Two instances from contemporary television confirm this.

The one concerns television news and documentary programmes. When interviews are conducted it is often difficult to get the reaction shots of the questioner. For this reason, a later recording is made of the questioner - usually smiling appreciatively and nodding as though the argument is being closely followed. These shots - called 'noddies' - are then spliced into the interview before it is shown on television.

For a related reason, the producers of the first ventures into recording the proceedings of the House of Commons, which started in November 1989, were specifically constrained by not being able to record the reactions of fellow MPs whenever anybody spoke.

The technical reason concerns the operation of the camera. Most first-time users of a video camera overuse the facilities. That is to say, the image is changed too frequently: unnecessarily often and with too much visual violence.

An example of this occurs if the operator attempts to pan to every speaker. The result for the viewer can be visual indigestion of the type frequently parodied when tennis matches are used in feature films: the viewer is upset at the camera swinging from left to right, from right to left.

To move smoothly from one close-up in a group to another, follow this sequence of camera operations:-

1 ZOOM IN - FOCUS - ZOOM OUT	This sets the focus
2 ZOOM IN, TILTING UP	Close-up, middle speaker
3 ZOOM OUT, TILTING DOWN	This shows the group again

4	ZOOM IN, PANNING LEFT, TILTING UP	Close-up, left hand speaker
5	ZOOM OUT, PANNING RIGHT, TILTING DOWN and immediately	
	PAN RIGHT, ZOOMING IN, TILTING DOWN	Close-up, right hand speaker

As you tilt up and down, remember to keep the eyes of the speakers about one third of the way down the screen.

The camera operations outlined above suggest that the participants in these scenes do not move away from the fixed point or semi-circle where the focus has been correctly adjusted. With an automatic focus, this constraint does not apply, allowing the camera to be used with larger groups, to cope with movement about the classroom when, for example, performing sketches.

Topics for pairs and small groups

Clearly any of the range of classroom groupwork activities that are normally used in language teaching can be recorded; the suggestions given below can be found in many resource books. However, as discussed above in structuring short presentations, the heightened awareness of the video recording procedure can concentrate the learners' minds on the nature of the language activity. With each type of interaction - for example, seeking information, getting things done (persuasion), or negotiating - there will be specific characteristics of language used. By making the students aware of this, the language learning programme can be planned to focus on the required communicative skills for that group.

The following suggestions are very suitable for language practice between two or three participants:

Everyday transactions

These range from the use of repeated formulaic language to more complicated enquiries about size, colour, price, and so on.

Asking the way
Routine purchases (tickets, stamps, newspapers, sweets, bread)
Personal purchases (clothing, flowers, presents, computer system, desk)
Restaurants (asking about the menu, ordering)

At this level of practice, any prompts which learners might require are likely to be simple. Items for sale can have their price tags prominently displayed as a reminder, so there is no need for enquiry. Or one participant can have a simple cue card with a reminder of what to say:

How much is that, please?	*C'est combien, ça?*
Und was kostet das, bitte?	Сколко это стоит?

At a more advanced level, learners can be given constraints or special wishes:

21

Intermediate:	You want a present for ...., who likes decorative objects. You have only £4 to spend. Ask the shopkeeper what is available.

Advanced:	Im Auftrag Ihrer Kollegen bzw Kolleginnen sollten Sie ein kaltes Buffet für 25 Personen bestellen. Etwa die Hälfte der Gäste sind Vegetarier; erkundigen Sie sich bei der Lebensmittelabteilung, wie Sie mit ca. DM12 pro Kopf zurechtkommen.

The more detailed such cue cards become, then the closer the task moves towards a more complete role play or simulation.

Getting things done

Both aspects of suasion can be practised. The more usual persuading someone to do something is often practised to the exclusion of dissuading someone from a course of action.

The range of topics here is wide: from the banal, where there is little chance of conflict - *Can I borrow your pencil, please?* - to more tendentious issues, such as requests to borrow costly or delicate items: clothing, jewellery, tools, master tapes.

Furthermore, there may be social or cross-cultural conflicts. Many people from the USA willingly lend an expensive car to friends, yet many British people are reluctant to let their cars be driven by members of their own family. Similarly, there are great differences around the world in the extent to which one can seek or give advice on matters of personal health, wealth, hygiene, family behaviour or education.

As with other tasks, there is a wide spread of levels. These are suitable for beginners and intermediate students.

Ask to borrow an electric drill; you have not got one, but have some work to do at home.

Persuade a fellow user at the launderette to see to your washing: you do not understand what to do.

Persuade your neighbour to eat less/to drink less alcohol/to stop smoking.

As the suasion becomes more sophisticated, so both parties need more detailed cues. In this example, the learners A and B do not know the content of the other's cue card. This exercise was used to great effect at a conference where the teacher participants needed an immediate introduction to a pair work activity, but without any time or wish for preparation.

Learner A

You admire the works of William Shakespeare very much. For you, the plays are full of universal truths which are so relevant to life today. In particular, you believe yourself in the famous phrase *Neither a borrower nor a lender be.*

Learner B

You need to borrow £10. Ask your neighbour for the money politely. If you are unsuccessful, keep trying anyway, perhaps even to annoy the neighbour: be prepared to accept less - £1, 10p, or even a penny!

The success of such pair work activities often depends more on the willingness of the students to be inventive, witty, or irreverent rather than on their accuracy in grammatical terms.

Explaining how things work

There is tremendous scope here for genuine communicative language. What is said can be recorded for analysis of how the communication succeeds or not; the proof of success can be seen when the partner tries to operate or work whatever is used for the demonstration.

To the suggestions in a classroom setting given above under Topics for short presentation could be added these:

- performing a specific calculation on a calculator
- setting up and running a computer game
- operating a piece of workshop or home economics equipment
- building a model
- assembling components

Negotiations

The language of negotiation is available to students at many levels: from getting agreement on the food or records to be chosen for a party, to a full-scale business meeting. There are many ways of running negotiating exercises with students. Given that there is a vast range of topics, and that the interests of the particular learning group are varied yet known to the teacher, we can focus here on the nature of the language used, and the evaluation techniques (see Chapter 6).

As far as language use is concerned, students need help in deciding what to say when there is a choice, or how to choose what is most appropriate. Lists can be drawn up which illustrate a range of language.

In the examples in English here, there are several choices offered to the student. Firstly, within a range of neutral English, there are suitable alternatives. Secondly, there are contrasted forms, which vary from the standard by their differing degrees of

appropriacy in a situation, by being more or less polite, or more colloquial, and so on, than the standard language.

The students can be restricted to the standard language if necessary, until they have both the linguistic and the social skills to use the other versions. However, not all students will perceive these differences in appropriacy in the same way. French civil servants learning English, to take one target group, might be surprised that some of these English sentences count as rather formal. A literal translation into English of the standard French required might produce something even more flowery than the polite English forms. Finns, however, might be surprised at the elaborateness of neutral speech. Part of the ability to successfully communicate in a foreign language is having an understanding of these differences in language appropriacy.

These examples show just a few of many communicative functions which could be identified for the learners in negotiating. With sophisticated learners, such a list might suffice. With less sophisticated learners, a cue card could be provided, with a text such as:

> Interrupting
> Be sure to interrupt at least three people in the next five minutes.
> Use three different phrases from this list.
> Try to make your intonation pattern and body language match what you choose to say

The points which the cue card makes can be checked during the subsequent playback and evaluation.

Communicative function

Communicative function: Interrupting other people

Standard language	I'm sorry to interrupt, but I think that... If I may just come in here. You say that... Excuse me, can I say that...
More polite	Excuse me, I wonder if I could possibly add something here
Less polite	If you don't mind, I'd like to say something here. Hang on a minute! You can't expect us to... Just shut up for a minute, will you?

Communicative function: Expressing support and building on other people's ideas

Standard language	I couldn't agree more. ... and if we did that, then we would be able to... That's very good, because it means that we can...
More polite	If I may say so, that's a very good point

More colloquial	You've hit the nail on the head!

Communicative function: Blocking other people's ideas

Standard language	I'd agree with you up to a point, but what about... To some extent that's true, but ... I'm sure we all agree with you, but...
More polite	I really cannot imagine my colleagues agreeing with that. I'm sure that what you are saying makes good sense, but have you considered...
Deliberately rude	That's absolute nonsense - and you know it! Rubbish! Of all the stupid ideas I've ever heard...!

Making recordings of a few students in discussion is easy to do and rewarding for the learners. Teachers with no previous experience of camera work have found that, together with the learners, camera work can quickly become a regular feature of lessons. As we see in Chapter 4, the recordings provide useful material for evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

Sketches, role plays and simulations

Many of the activities described above could be listed under this heading. It serves here to designate those activities where there is potentially much more movement - around the room, into and out of the room, or action in various locations. Recording these activities may require more consideration of lighting, sound, camera movements and editing.

Lighting and sound

With a stationary group, the lighting remains constant. With movement, there may be differences in lighting which adversely affect the quality of the picture. This can be seen on television on sunny days when outside sports are broadcast. As the camera moves from the shadow of the stand to the open sunlight of another part of the arena, there is a contrast and glare which the technicians need to control.

It is similar in a classroom. If the main shot is towards a wall which is well lit, then somebody entering from a dark corridor may appear to be in obliterating blackness. If the camera is swung towards the bright sunlight streaming in through a window, then the television effect can be one of blinding glare.

Take whichever of the following steps are appropriate to overcome the potential problems:

- check the quality of light on all the camera shots before recording;
- switch on as many lights as possible, especially to illuminate subjects from behind;
- screen intrusive light by using blinds, curtains, or rolls of paper;
- adapt reality to suit the lighting conditions (for example, have a character enter a room from a cupboard door rather than the real door).
- use additional lighting.

None of these suggestions require extra technical knowledge or equipment.

A more complicated recording, with different lighting requirements in various sections, can be recorded in these sections, and edited together later; Chapter 6 explains the basic techniques required.

Recording the sound when subjects are moving can also cause difficulties. If a microphone is used which is so powerful that it will record from all parts of the room, care must be taken that there are no other extraneous noises.
Consider these options:

- suspend a microphone from the ceiling or a boom above the main scene of the action, and plan speaking roles only under or near it. Background sound, such as greetings or small talk of other participants, can stay muted;

- deploy the two parts of a stereo microphone in two different places, and have two sources of sound;

See Chapter 6 for further details of these techniques:

- use a sound mixing desk to record from a number of separate microphones;
- add a voice-over commentary, music, or other sound after the recording has been made (see Editing).

Operating the camera: crane, track and crab

The camera operations described until now assume that the camera remains in one place. It is merely tilted or turned (panned), with the close-up and distance effects coming from the use of the zoom facility.

The camera can of course be moved:

- raised up and lowered on its tripod (crane up, crane down)
- to the left and to the right (crab left, crab right)
- to and from the subject (track in, track out)

These movements are necessary in certain circumstances, and especially if the continuous recording of different movements in some sort of close-up is required. However, there is a danger of overusing these techniques. Watching feature films or television shows how seldom they are used in contrast with the main techniques.

Crane, track and crab are described in this overview of camera movements.

Camera Operation	**Effect when recording**
Focus up and de-focus	The subject is brought in and out of focus. Use this facility with the Zoom-in to get the correct focus before recording.
Zoom-in and Zoom-out	Adjusting the zoom lens makes the subject appear nearer or further away. On automatic zooms T = Zoom-in, W = Zoom-out Zoom in to establish the correct focus.
Tilt up and Tilt down	The camera remains stationary and fixed in one direction. When tilted up, the subject appears to move down the screen; when tilted down, the subject moves up the screen. To keep a speaker in constant position on screen, use Tilt up when Zooming in on a subject; use Tilt down when Zooming out away from a subject.
Pan right and Pan left	The camera remains stationary and level, and is swivelled to the left or the right.

	Use to create a sweeping effect, or use with Tilt and Zoom to change subjects in a scene with several speakers.
Crane up and Crane down	The camera moves to a higher or lower position, usually by extending or retracting the tripod stalk. Use with Tilt down and Zoom-in, for example, to look over a speaker's shoulder and down at something such as a map, diagram, or object.
Crab left and Crab right	The camera is moved to the left or to the right.
Track in and Track out	The camera moves towards or away from the subjects. Use in conjunction with other movements to establish a new position in relation to the subject group.

Camera shots

The term Close-up is understood and used readily by many people with no experience of cameras, as its meaning is self-evident. Within the recording world, the term has a specific meaning in relation to the names of other shots. Fig 7 gives an overview of the common terms used.

Vocabulary of camera work 2

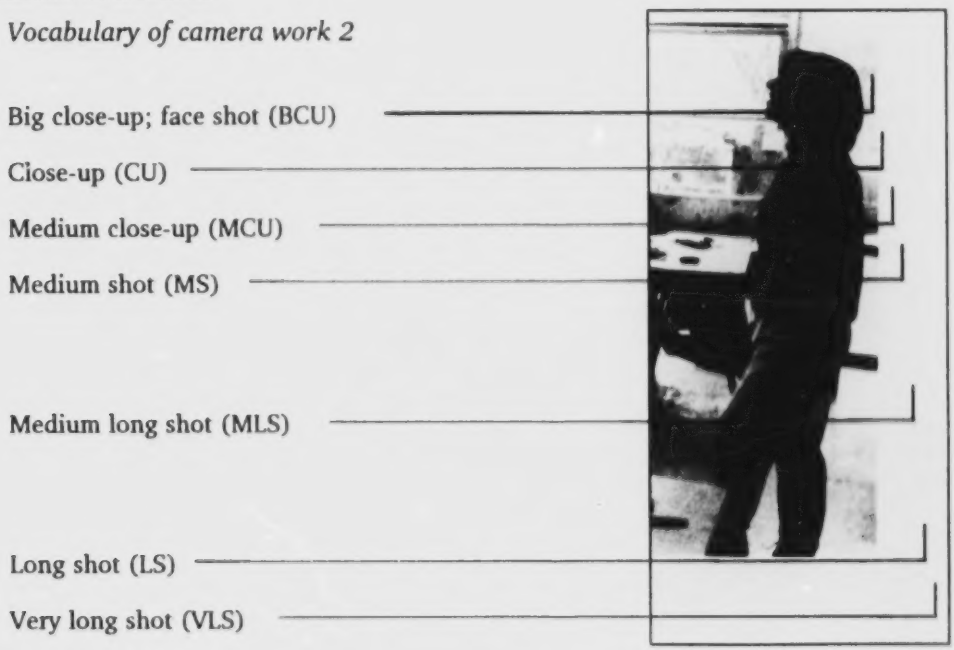


Fig. 7

Ideas for sketches, role plays and simulations

The use of various devices to prompt students to speak is widespread and these include cue cards, picture flashcards, suggestions for behaviour or strategy, role descriptions, and scripts. Sometimes the prompts arise from the speakers themselves, when learners are able to respond to the communication needs of the situation spontaneously. Choose whatever aids are appropriate to the scene being recorded. A verbatim script is necessary in a play, but out of place in a simulated negotiation.

These suggestions are grouped under three headings. When evaluating the performance of learners in carrying out these different activities, it is important to be clear about the main purposes of the activities. These include situational practice in general communicative activities; the expression of specialist knowledge in the target language; and the enjoyment of putting on a good performance.

Role plays

In role plays, students are asked to adopt roles in staged settings. The students' communicative ability is measured by their success in realising the requirements of the role.

In most language learning role plays, the central roles are ones which the students can be expected to play in real life, such as a tourist, an exchange student, a diner, a visiting business executive, or a conference leader. Other roles taken by the learners are merely enabling roles; somebody has to be the receptionist, the waiter, the shopkeeper, or the teacher so that the role play can take place. However, the students do not act for themselves: they are in role.

Suggestions:
- The language classroom
- Café and restaurant scenes; a cocktail party
- At the sports centre
- Interview panels
- In the workshop
- The meeting: arrival, assembly and speeches

In courses for specific purposes, there will be specific roles allied to jobs: telephonist, waiter, sales manager, drugs enforcement officer, gynaecologist, where the enabling roles are those of ordinary members of the public. Playing specific vocational roles moves the activity towards a simulation.

Simulations

In simulations in language learning, everything is simulated except the behaviour of the participants. Within the context and parameters of the simulation, the participants act as themselves.

In courses such as Spanish for Lawyers, or Cantonese for Immigration Officers, the lawyers or immigration officers may discuss a made-up issue about a fictitious person, but they will do so using their knowledge of law or immigration procedures.

Similarly, courses may focus on specific communication skills, such as giving presentations, negotiating in committee, interpreting for community service agents, or making small talk at social occasions. Once the objectives have been defined, the students' own abilities in these areas come into play.

Suggestions:

Selection committees: the participants are given a scenario which involves narrowing down options from many to a few, such as:

selecting one candidate for a task
choosing one route or building option
agreeing the disposal of budgets
planning a concert evening or disco or party, with examples

Confrontations: the participants represent different points of view and meet in adversarial terms, such as:

students versus staff on contentious issues
public service agents versus claimants
legal moots
competitive tendering

Cooperative meetings: the participants must jointly plan or produce something, such as:

a staff/student magazine or newspaper
a radio programme or video programme
a committee agenda
negotiating deals

Work experience: events from the actual work experience of the participants are re-enacted, and the learners act out their jobs, such as:

manning the reception desk and switchboard
crisis management in the face of a simulated specialist issue
community interpreting interviews
financial dealings: applications

The students' performance is assessed not on their specialist knowledge, but on their use of language and their communication skills when they bring that knowledge to bear on the simulated issue.

Sketches

This term includes plays and drama, whether scripted or improvised. Essentially, the substance of what is being performed is dramatic fiction. The setting may be familiar (a restaurant, a sweet shop, a health centre), but the point of the sketch lies in its dramatic

elements. For this reason, there are also fantasy settings: the fairy forest, Mars, somewhere in the Middle Ages. The drama will contain the elements of comedy, tragedy, mystery or whatever.

There is no suggestion that the learners will ever need to play the roles in the sketches in real life. They may be asked to be thieves, police, fairies, space explorers, shop assistants or teachers.

Suggestions:
- Fairy tales
- Dramatised poetry readings
- Scripted parodies of soap operas or other popular TV shows
- School/institution-based satire
- Enactments of favourite jokes
- Published sketches and playlets

The students' communicative ability is measured within the parameters of the drama, and the worth of the whole recording can be assessed in terms of its success as drama.

In actual classroom practice, the distinctions made here between role play, simulation and sketch may be blurred. For example, the parts of a couple having dinner in a restaurant scene could be generated by all three.

However, a consideration of the differences in the types of activity helps clarify the learning objectives. When students are convinced that the classroom activities they undertake have precise aims, then the learning process is greatly enhanced.

Recording a diverse range of students' activities provides a valuable resource for teacher and learner alike. Exploiting these video recordings requires an approach to evaluation and feedback different from that found in many mainstream language courses.

CHAPTER 4

Evaluating learners' performance

This short chapter is meant to be informative, as the feedback and evaluation sessions with students can be the most fruitful aspect of working with a video camera.

The most important aspect of feedback is that the evaluation of performance should take place in an atmosphere of empathy, trust and confidence. There is no point in recording a learner, and then using the evidence to undermine self-confidence or present the hesitant communicator with a barrage of criticism and list of errors.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, some students are prone to develop an antipathy anyway to having their performance recorded on video.

Teachers can avoid this development by:

- actively maintaining the confidence of the learners;
- playing back the performance for viewing as soon as practicable;
- asking all concerned to be constructive in their criticisms;
- explaining clearly the policy on the storage of recorded tapes (if indeed they are to be stored).

A further point concerns the correction of mistakes. Experience suggests that this need not be done only by the teacher. In fact, many learners perceive their own mistakes as soon as they are apparent on the replay. A typical scenario for conducting feedback is given at the end of the chapter, but first we can consider the nature of the analysis of the learners' performance.

What can be evaluated?

There are two main approaches to evaluating the performance of learners on video. One is to listen to the language used, analyse what is said, and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the speakers.

The second approach depends on viewing the whole of the communicative situation, and responding to the learners' overall performance.

The language analysis approach to evaluation

The 'listening to language' approach has predictable consequences. Language teachers who know their classes also know which errors they are likely to make. These can be easily predicted from experience, or from native language interference (contrastive analysis) and from difficulties within the system of the target language (error analysis).

Most of the following examples would appear on nearly every language teacher's list of common mistakes made by learners:

phonology: e.g. vowel quality, aspiration, word length, stress, intonation;

morphemes: e.g. affixes, word formation;
concord: e.g. verb endings, gender and number agreements, case endings;
lexis: e.g. false friends, mis-use, guesses, silence;
syntax: e.g. word order, 'anglicisms' and other '-isms', formation of clauses;
sentences: e.g. incoherent, unfinished.

It is clear that all these elements of language are most important. They are the building bricks from which the whole edifice of the language is built.

However, they need not be the starting point for the evaluation of learners' ability to communicate.

The communicative performance approach to evaluation

Evaluating the learners' communicative ability using a performance or discourse level approach takes into account the need to master the building blocks of the language, but does so from a different starting position.

The first question to be raised is *How well has the learner performed the communication task?* We can test the efficacy of this approach by considering this imaginary, but realistic scene:

> In a crowded square of a regional capital, thousands listen to an orator. The speech finishes to tumultuous applause. As the crowd then disperses, there are remarks made and overheard, such as: *What a great speech! I thought it was marvellous! Wonderful! What a speaker - so good!* Once again the orator has triumphed, winning the hearts of the people.

These are the typical responses of the ordinary citizen to a powerful speech. These are the remarks not of applied linguists or language teachers, but of 'normal' people. They do not say *What a use of the subjunctive!* or *Pretty impressive connectives there!* and still less *I was really impressed by the irregular dative plural case endings.*

The assessment is made rather by an instinctive understanding of the communicative power and impact of what has been said. It is a global appraisal of the whole discourse.

This is the starting point for the evaluation of most video recordings of learners' performance.

ASSESSING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

Taking some of the elementary suggestions from Chapter 1, we might ask the following questions to assess the success of the communication:

> Have these learners satisfactorily and efficiently introduced themselves?
> Was that a well-presented description of the speaker's home town?
> Did the speaker use a simple, yet effective, story-telling technique?

At a more advanced level, where there is more content in the presentation, or more speakers, the questions might be:

> How coherent was that explanation of the new product?

How convincing was that forecast of performance?
Who came out of these negotiations best? - And why?

Concentrating on a different aspect of the communication, these questions could be put:

Did the speaker address the audience properly? Was the stance correct?
Did the speaker's gestures match the language used?
Did the speaker's body language signal the same information as the text?

Where cultural or social factors come into play, then we might ask:

Is the degree of formality correct?
Is this an appropriate use of language for the audience?
Is this the right register to use for this exposition?

As the analysis progresses, such questions can focus on finer points of detail:

Why were your interruptions so unsuccessful?
How did your opponent manage to hold the floor so well?
Why were your attempts at supporting the compromise solution which you wanted so unsuccessful?

Already the focus has switched from a view of the total communication (compare with our orator above), to a more detailed analysis of the communication. If we proceed further, we come to the level of what was said and how it was said.

This progression is shown in the worksheet (Fig 8). It shows the analysis of a presentation made in English by a native speaker of Putonghua Chinese.

Worksheets such as this can be kept on file as blanks, ready for use at any time.

The role of the teacher and the learners

When learners see and hear themselves on screen, they frequently recognise their own errors. And if they do not, someone else in the class probably will. In this respect, watching a video playback for evaluation of performance is quite different from, for example, checking a written text. Students (and authors) the world over can stare at their own manuscript for hours, and still not see glaring mistakes.

But if this is the case, that the learners can spot their own mistakes, what is the role of the teacher?

The teacher can be freed from the immediate correction of mistakes to concentrate on feedback to the class at a higher level. If we take as a useful sequence of correction learner - peer group - teacher, we have the following:

- the learner has the first chance to comment on the performance as it is played back, whether in praise or to criticise;
- the peer group is next as the recording is played, either to initiate comment if none was forthcoming, or as a follow-up;
- the teacher brings up the rear, summing up the major points for the benefit of all the class.

Video Assessment
Presentation Skills

Name: Xiang, Li

Date: 21 April '90 Language: ESP

Overall Impression:
Clearly well prepared — but over-rehearsed. Li doesn't capture or hold the audience's interest — too wooden.

Behaviour and use of gestures: Finger pointing and arm waving for emphasis is too studied — but it fits the text.

Coherence and cohesion: Good factual content — but poorly strung together. No signalling of new topics, or even of old ones referred to again

Structures, grammar and vocabulary:
Basically very good. Still 'he/she' confusion. Also, ellipsis in present perfect "they done." Occasional errors in articles 'the', 'a'.

Intonation: No use of low rise to indicate known topics.

Phonetics:
Still indistinct 'l/r' opposition. Final clusters not articulated fully — e.g. 'strengths', 'tackled.'

Assessor: JPL. N.B. Needs more phon. practice.

Fig. 8

This sequence is of course only feasible if the learners have the sophistication to make suitable comments. If they have not, then the teacher's first task is to train them how to observe, or perhaps more commonly, how to speak up about what they observe.

However, assuming that the learners can comment, what will they comment on? Most obviously, they will comment on what they have been studying. For the vast majority of learners this will mean grammar in one form or another.

The comments of the learners will be made in response to the recording as it is played back. The result may be an accurate set of comments, with praise and criticism, but it will have the hotch-potch character of an assessment carried out as one watches. This linear assessment can be useful. But even more useful is an overall picture of the common errors in grammar, and this is what the teacher can provide when the students cannot.

The teacher's task in most cases then is twofold. Firstly, to draw together into a coherent whole the perhaps disparate comments of the students. Secondly, to lead the students to an awareness of their performance at a discourse level, of how well they communicate.

Some students are more sophisticated. Learners on special courses in, say, presentation skills will be aware of other factors. In this case, perhaps the use of visual aids, or stance and audience eye-contact, or similar paralinguistic features is the first thing on which they will comment. Alternatively, the learner may feel that the beginning was good, but that the zest and pace was lost at a particular point in the exposition. This of course helps the teacher over parts of the analysis.

FROM DISCOURSE LEVEL TO THE ELEMENTS OF GRAMMAR

The next step for the teacher is to show the learner what is required. We can return here to the sequence suggested above in more detail. The scale of analysis shows a descent from the discourse as a whole (the orator in the square) to the phonemic level (the correction of the pronunciation of one sound):

- discourse level analysis checks on the communicative success of the whole event
- strategic analysis discusses possible gambits and key utterances
- register and appropriacy of language can be considered
- paralinguistic features at this level of analysis and at all lower levels
- sentence level analysis concentrates on specific phrases
- a knowledge of grammar can investigate syntax
- new vocabulary items be discussed
- at word level concord of case, gender, number and other agreements can be checked
- phonological improvements can be made to all the utterances at a variety of levels: intonation, stress, rhythm
- native tongue interference will cause predictable errors in certain sounds

Conclusion

Working with a video camera to record the learners' performance is exciting, challenging, and above all interesting for students and teacher alike.

The recordings provide a wealth of information which can be used to assess communicative ability. For teachers new to using video, it should be clear that the methodology of assessment with video differs from the more traditional methods of marking students' work. Working with a new medium demands a new approach.

CHAPTER 5

Student projects and language teaching materials

Involving students in projects with a video camera is a stimulating way of getting them to use the target language in a variety of useful ways. Making language teaching materials to meet your own specific requirements is rewarding, both professionally and personally. However, carrying out these activities is quite different from recording students' performance.

As far as using video equipment is concerned, there are no significant extra problems involved. The main difference lies in the amount of planning and preparation required and the nature of the work involved. In the case of language training materials, there is also the extra dimension of the classroom follow-up to what is developed. The training materials need a proper classroom exploitation.

Preparation, planning and follow-up: a comparison

Recording students, as described in Chapters 1-3, of course does require the equipment to be ready and in working order. But little extra preparation or planning is necessary: after all, a lesson would take place anyway. Rather, the work comes in the feedback and evaluation stage.

Diagrammatically, we can represent the effort involved as in Fig 8.

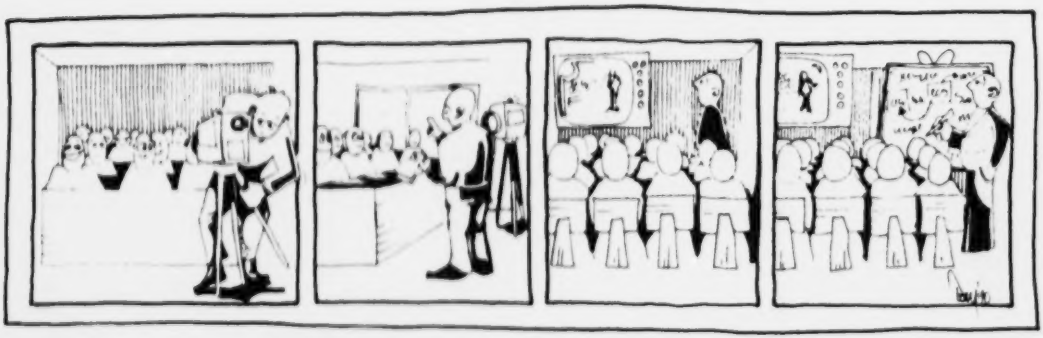


Fig. 8

With student projects the sequence is different. As we shall see, the playback phase is the end. Showing the project is the climax of the work, the moment of glory for the team who made the video projects. Making language teaching materials is akin to being a project for teachers. As such, it involves all the stages in projects for students (see Fig 9).

However, the point of recording the material is that it is then exploited for language learning. To do this successfully requires the development of suitable materials, such

Fig. 9

as worksheets, handouts, and group activities. This is then followed by the classroom follow-up.

It is of course quite possible to intertwine these three basic modes of operation. A colleague at the language training department of a major industrial company uses the specialist resources of the company as raw material for video projects by his advanced classes. They record such things as complicated machinery in action, or make expositions of chemical processes. These projects are then used as language training materials for less advanced students who have the same interests.

For the sake of clarity, we shall consider the two topics separately.

Student projects

Handing the video camera to the students may seem a drastic step. But experience shows that the intensity of commitment to the task by the students makes the project worthwhile.

Furthermore, in any group of students there are always some who are much keener on using the equipment than many teachers. This applies to all age groups. Those who teach primary school children using video cameras will know how well they take to being camera operators and production directors.

The first part of this chapter concentrates on these student activities:

- suggestions for projects by the students;
- a checklist of procedures for teachers and for students.

Suggestions for projects by the students

The aim of all these projects is the same. The students should use the target language to create a video project.

The range of possibilities is endless, and a quick brainstorm with a group will throw up many new ideas. The ones listed here are all taken from actual projects; they were made either by genuine language students, or by teachers making a project as a first introduction to camera work. The technical operations introduced here are explained later in this chapter or in Chapter 6, as indicated.

The selection of projects exemplified below includes:

Advertisements
Vox pop interviews
Documentaries
Fairy tales
Mysteries and other stories
Instructional programmes
Spoof language training programmes
Video news magazines

Advertisements

Making advertisements in any medium is an activity which attracts language learners. It allows them to show their skill at any level of language ability by copying and operating within an extremely structured framework.

★ Advertise the language teaching institution where the students are. This gives scope for wit and irony about something all the students know well.
★ Spoof consumer products are easy to think up, require few props apart from re-labelling realia, and again encourage student inventiveness.
★ Holiday ads for overseas resorts allow students to present their own country, if they are abroad; or students to talk about places they have visited or would like to visit. The judicious use of posters showing exotic places adds spice to the advertisements. By using the scenic part of the poster, you can give the appearance of recordings made on location (see Chapter 6).

Vox pop interviews

Listening to the voice of the people - vox populi - about an issue is an excellent way of getting students to meet speakers of the target language. If necessary, other learners, perhaps at a higher level, will have to stand in for the native speakers. The technique is relatively easy - but take care with the hand-held microphone (see Chapter 6). It is one seen frequently on television.

★ Favourite things - colours, records, personalities, food, and so on - are the staple diet

of quizzes with the famous in many popular magazines. These can be quarried to give the interviewing students the basis for the questions.

★ Opinions on current affairs may call for too much sophistication on behalf of the respondents if the questions are put badly. To keep it very simple, ask Yes/No questions. To open it up, ask open-ended questions. Alternatively, ask for opinions on simpler topics.

★ Local history is an engaging topic for students in the country of the target language.

Documentaries

Documentaries are suitable for students of all levels of ability. They allow students at advanced level to show what they can do. But at a lower level, students can adapt existing professional documentaries by adding their own voices reading their own scripts. This is done by adding a new sound track to recorded visual images: the audio-dubbing techniques (see Chapter 6).

★ *Life in Britain*, or whatever country, is easily recreated in the classroom, through the use of realia, posters, and special sound effects (see Chapter 6).

★ *The Pier:* A sea-side pier has fallen into disrepair. Only the efforts of a Turkish millionaire will save it from ruin. He spends time and money on restoring it, until his attention is caught by the attractions of nude sun-bathing on a pebble beach. This short vignette was made especially interesting by the use of unusual captions (see Chapter 6).

★ *Ducks and Deckchairs* was a whimsical documentary made about Hyde Park. The makers decided not to focus on the normal bustle of the park, such as the lunchtime sunbathers, Speakers' Corner, or the leisure facilities. Rather they took as their theme a group of deckchairs, and observed the changing occupancy of them as the day went by. But the largest proportion of the project was devoted to the very early morning. At that time, the ducks from the Serpentine Lake walk freely among the otherwise deserted deckchairs. The low level camera work, from a distance, showed the happy ducks of all sizes wandering around the area soon to be overtaken by humans.

Fairy tales

Every culture has folk tales involving the fantastic. Enacting and recording a fairy tale has many advantages. The storyline is known, so the students' efforts can be concentrated on such things as getting props, costumes, choosing locations, and other procedural matters (see below). Fairy tales often involve magical appearances: in an instant a fairy godmother, or piles of gold, or a table laden with food appear on screen, from nowhere. This magic effect is easy to achieve by editing the recording with the pause button (see Chapter 6).

Multinational classes or visiting groups can amuse themselves by each recording stories peculiar to their own country.

★ *The Magic Fountain*: wishes made at a secret magic fountain will bring prosperity, happiness and love. But beware those who do not make their wishes in a noble

spirit: greed is punished. Good scope for exotic costumes at a location with water (see below).

★ *Tischlein Deck Dich*: a poor (German speaking) peasant discovers a spell which causes an empty table to be decked with food for a banquet. A good tale for visual magic effects (see Chapter 6).

★ *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*: while the Bear family take a walk, Goldilocks eats some porridge, breaks a chair, and falls asleep in bed. A good example of a story with repetition of events and dialogue, making it especially suitable for young beginners.

Mysteries and fantasies

A favourite with many students, short mystery stories are easy to make in or near a classroom; providing props is important (see below).

★ *The Stolen Handbag*: something is stolen. Clever camera work lets the viewer know who the culprit is, and we watch the cast setting out to catch a thief.

★ *Whodunit?* With murky lighting and disguises, we do not know who has committed a murder. But we find out by watching to the end.

★ *A Fantasy Adventure*: in a land of weird creatures - goblins, mystics, dwarfs, noble knights - a hero has to pursue a quest, using stamina, prowess, strength, cunning and wisdom. These stories are immensely popular with children aged from about eight to fifteen years, and are a proven source of imaginative thinking.

Instructional programmes

Most projects of this type tend to be humorous, satirising the real television programmes which set out to instruct. However, as the videos on chemical processes referred to above suggest, this is not always the case.

★ *Specialist topics*: the project focuses on an area of specialist knowledge shared by the group, and a video is made to explain it. For example, how a computer system works; how an off-set printer works; chemical processes; company export figures.

★ *Cultural satire*: *Making the Tea the English Way* provides a Spanish lady with the perfect opportunity of teasing the English. Too little tea is put into a cold pot to which luke warm water is added.

★ *Learning to...:* of this type of video, *Learning to Drive* seems to be the most popular. Perhaps it is because adults relate to it from personal experience, and children aspire to being behind the wheel of a car.

Spoof language training programmes

The students' revenge! A benign approach from teachers is necessary, as personal foibles are exploited, usually wittily, by the mimics in the class. Some favourite settings include:

★ *In the language lab*: or some other setting. A pointless dialogue or exercise is practised to no avail, to the amusement of the class and frustration of the teacher.
★ *At the blackboard*: the illegible writing and incoherent explanations favoured by generations of teachers come to your screen.
★ *Technology*: teacher fails to cope with the leads, wires, switches and equipment.

Video news magazines

These deserve special mention, even though in essence they are a form of documentary. Making a news magazine about your own class or school has three main functions:

★ for internal enjoyment: the video programme is treated by the school as a newsletter or magazine.
★ for pen friend exchanges: swop programmes on an individual or class basis.
★ for school exchanges: swop programmes on a class or school basis.

It may be more suitable for the class to make the programme in their native language, and receive materials in the target language. If that happens, then the teacher will need to prepare the classroom use of the received material (see below).

Another aspect of these international exchanges is the cross-cultural complications of understanding gestures and body language. Students can exchange sequences on which they challenge the other viewers to guess the meaning of various paralinguistic features of communication. This is discussed in more detail at Language Teaching Materials on p 43.

This selection from actual projects gives an indication of how wide-ranging they can be; shows how they appeal to different age groups or levels of ability; and suggests that planning is required in carrying them out.

Checklist of procedures

The teacher has two major roles during student video projects.

The first one is as a facilitator for the whole project. This may require a great deal of work, especially with less sophisticated learners who need guidance in all aspects of the project. It may be that no more than occasional intervention is needed, perhaps at an administrative support level, if the group is able to work on its own. In setting up projects, the teacher must also be aware of the amount of time which will be invested in the work. The excitement of camera work means that many students will want to pursue it exclusively, ignoring other very important areas of the learning programme.

Consider at the outset how much time is going to be used: one double lesson? A lesson a week for four weeks? Ten hours or more intensive work devoted to the language? A residential weekend for complete immersion, akin to the geography field trips? Each option must be considered.

The second role is more central to the whole project. This is as the language teacher and monitor of language use.

The main aim of the project is that the students should speak the target language as much as possible. Pragmatic considerations will dictate that the native tongue is used in

certain circumstances, just as with other group tasks that occur in the classroom. But a long term goal is that the students use the language to make the project.

Their use of language comes not just in the recording and the speaking of the dialogue, but also in the preparation which is necessary for a project.

The teacher will probably take the initiative in allocating roles to students at first, until they are familiar with the requirements.

Before detailed work commences, produce an outline script. The outline script allows ideas to be debated with the class. The project can be assessed for overall viability and practicability, in the light of the allocation of roles. These are the key tasks during recording:

Actors	These have the speaking parts, if there are any. In some projects, the actors do not have to speak, as the whole of the sound track is added at the editing stage (see Chapter 6).
Extras	These appear on screen, but do not speak. Such roles might be shoppers, passengers passing through customs, or people in a café. These roles are useful for introducing shy learners to the screen.
Camera operator	One or more students can operate the camera during recording. At a more advanced level, there may be more than one camera in use, requiring more than one camera operator.
Sound recordist	There are two tasks involved here. One is checking that the sound recording being made is actually there. Headphones are worn for this, and it is a simple matter for the camera operator to do this at the same time as recording. The other task is to play music or make sound effects during recording, if they are required at the same time as the recording is made. This requires a separate pair of hands.
Lighting assistant	Unless the project is very sophisticated, it is unlikely that extra lights will be needed.
Stage hands	Preparation of props and effects beforehand is vital. Stage hands during recording will only be required in special circumstances. Otherwise, scenery and the like can be re-adjusted during pauses in the recording.
Director	This is the role which appeals to many people's fantasy. The Director has to coordinate, monitor and direct all the activities involved in recording at the same time. With inexperienced learners, the teacher may take this role at first.

Some recordings are made knowing that an entirely new sound track will be added. This makes the task of the director easy, as everybody involved can speak and make noises during recording. Whatever sound is recorded will be erased by the audio dub (see Chapter 6).

If, as is usually the case, the dialogue is being recorded, then everybody has to be quiet during recording. The director enforces the discipline - and also has to agree a set of hand signals to let the actors and others know what to do and when.

Before recording there is the essential preparation. The major item, of course, is deciding on the project, preparing the spoken script, and preparing the shooting script. These are dealt with in detail below, but here are other tasks which may or may not be necessary, depending on the project:

★ Deciding on the location

There are various constraints here to be borne in mind:
- Power: Is there an electricity supply for the video equipment? If not, are there sufficient batteries for the recording?
- Access: Is the location easy to get to? Can you return if a further visit is needed? Is special permission needed? - a surprising number of shops and public services send video cameras away.
- Suitability: Can the project members stay warm and dry? Is the site free from intrusive noise or objects?

★ Choosing the props

Props can be very simple, such as a fork, a scarf, a box of matches. Or the planned production might require the equivalent of a full scale theatrical drama. Are the required props realistic? Who will get them? Who will return them?

★ Timing

Professional broadcasters might work on location all day for just five minutes of finished material. For amateur projects, the time/completion ratio is more favourable. But remember that 20 to 30 minutes finished video will still take two to three hours to record. Check that the timescale is sufficient to meet the objectives - be prepared for a compromise.

★ Contacts and interviewees

Conducting interviews on the street at random can work, especially if the street is busy. But otherwise, check that you will be on location at the same time as essential third parties.

★ Other considerations

If a project demands it, there may be further considerations, such as make-up, expenses, or fees.

★ Preparing the script

Writing dialogues or commentaries is easy: the words are jotted down on paper in the sequence in which they are to be spoken. Preparing a video script is the same, except that all the factors need to be taken into account:

visual information: what we will see;
dialogue: spoken material we will hear - dialogue is normally recorded at the same time as the video recording;
commentary: spoken material we will hear - commentary can be added after the video recording has been made;
extra sounds: what other noises we will hear;
time: how long each shot or sequence takes;
action: what else happens apart from the speech;
notes: any special features or effects (FX) which may be required.

Fig 10 shows a story board with typical entries in each category.

From a master copy, prepare a large number of blank story board sheets. Many will be discarded before the final version is agreed on. Even then, there will probably be changes once recording starts.

The language learning potential of these projects is unlimited. As far as possible all the activities above should be conducted in the target language. For this reason, the teacher should devolve as much responsibility as possible to the students. The teacher is then free to move around and monitor the language used by the sub-groups as they work.

There will probably be many items of vocabulary, if not syntax, which the students will not know. The project puts them in the situation where they want to find out what they are: the new items spring from the learners' own interests. The contents are determined by the learners, rather than by a central textbook. Instead of being obliged to learn language, the students will do so through the project by doing, by experiencing the language at work.

Language teaching materials

Your own language teaching materials bring immediacy, relevance and personal interest into the classroom.

As the teacher, you know the strengths and weaknesses of the students, and so their specific language learning needs. With the right resources, you can provide some material to match these needs. It is clear that what you produce will lack the high quality and professionalism of broadcast television - which the students watch so much of. However, your product will have an intimacy and direct application which materials produced by outsiders cannot have.

Production issues

In terms of the production of video materials, there is nothing specific to making language training materials which does not apply to other uses of the camera - most obviously, student projects.

The hints and suggestions given throughout this book apply here too, so there is no need for further information about the use of the equipment.

The main differences lie firstly in the advantage of being able to record native speakers saying what you require. Secondly, there is an added dimension to the exploitation of the materials when they are shown; this is discussed at the end of the chapter.

VIDEO STORY BOARD

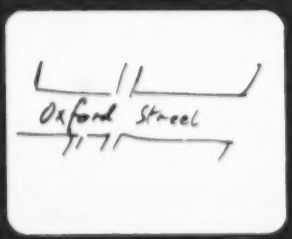
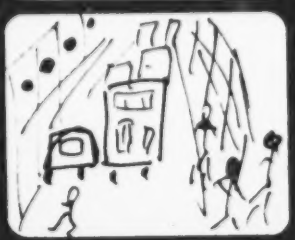
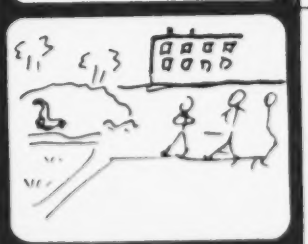
TIME	SCENE	FX	Dialogue/VO/ Captions	
0" 10"		/	London. A capital city known all over the world.	Use Paul's coloured map for aerial view
10" 13"		Fade up traffic noise	But do you think of this as London — ?	Zoom in to oxford street
13" 18"		loud traffic, hooting &c.		CUT
18" 25"		cut to quiet birdsong	or this?	CUT
25"			London means different things to different people . . .	Zoom out to include people (+presenter)

Fig. 10

Topics for language teaching materials

Broadly speaking, there are two types of materials. One type presents language as a model for students to imitate. The other type presents a stimulus to which the students react, encouraging them to use the target language.

In many cases, the categories overlap. An interesting discussion programme, for example, can provoke debate among the students; in order to talk about the topic effectively, the learners must use the language - vocabulary, phrases, mode of speech - of the people in the discussion.

Language as a model

All the activities suggested in the first three chapters of this book can be made into exemplary teaching materials. Anything which the students do - presentations, negotiations, transactions - will bring benefits if there is a recorded version available which is correct. To that extent there is no point in rehearsing a catalogue of activities. Rather, we can look to aspects of the teaching materials which will differ from the students' versions.

★ Native speakers as models

Video recordings can be used to capture the speech of native speakers. Moreover, because you are designing the materials, the native speakers will be speaking and acting in the way you want to portray to the students.

If teachers themselves are not native speakers, then a video camera is the ideal opportunity to utilise the visits of guests, the presence of language assistants, or the goodwill of your native speaking friends. This is particularly useful for teachers of those languages which cannot be recorded from satellite television broadcasts.

★ Realistic settings

Classroom roleplays and simulations are necessarily conditioned by the surroundings. When making training materials, you have much more control over the settings. The correct choice of location will add greatly to the impact of the teaching material.

The setting will make the use of appropriate language, of gestures and other body movements, appear more natural and convincing. It is easier to shrug, turn away, walk a few paces, and return to the argument in a street than it is to use these paralinguistic features in a classroom aisle.

The setting will also define many of the parameters for deciding the type of language to be used in terms of register and appropriacy. This will be done in part by visual information, showing such things as the dress, age, manners and sex of the main speakers; the place and time of the events. It will also be achieved by the nature of the discourse being recorded, such as presentations, explanation of processes, identification of faults, or shopping transactions.

★ Realistic contexts for language

The classroom practice of particular language items, such as vocabulary, tense forms, or

syntax, is often artificial, because of the inescapable constraints of the classroom. With your own materials, a context can be created in which the use of the target language items is natural.

Themes such as sports can be discussed in sports shops or centres, with realia ready to hand. This allows for the building and extension of word fields, for the individualisation of vocabulary by the learners (see below), and the realistic practice of specific structures.

Concepts such as weights and measures can be discussed in diverse locations, such as shops (selling food and selling scales), post offices, weighbridges and laboratories.

★ Targeted language practice: phonetics

Language practice may be required in quite specific areas for which there are no useful or relevant training materials available. The examples suggested can deal well with structures and vocabulary.

A video camera can be used to excellent effect for some teaching of phonetics. Close-ups of the movements of the lips, teeth and tongue can explain articulation without the need for complicated terminology. One of the main reasons why learners cannot accurately repeat new sounds is that they are not trained to hear the new sounds before they are asked to say them. By seeing that there are differences in articulation, their awareness of the possible aural differences is raised.

★ Targeted communication practice: paralinguistic features

The close-ups of the face for articulatory phonetics can be extended to cover other facial movements, such as eyebrow raising, tosses of the head, or grimaces. Learners can appreciate what a Greek waiter means by the backward flip of the head, what an Indian means with a rolling head movement, or how a Bulgarian nods to mean *No*.

The whole body can be featured, comparing the aspects of communication such as proxemics. Brazilians stand far closer to each other than Japanese in normal conversation. Finns find the English excitable, always using gestures; in contrast, Mexicans find the English static and unexcitable.

A further point about imitating gestures (for those that want to) is that the characteristic intonation patterns of certain sentences are matched by equally characteristic body language. Combining the two makes learning each one easier.

★ Cultural body language quiz

This involves presenting potentially puzzling gestures and body language to a group of viewers, who must guess the meanings. It is an exploitation of paralinguistic features which can be adapted for several purposes.

Monocultural classes can send a video recording of themselves to their overseas exchange partners (see Student Projects above).

Multicultural classes can split into groups and each present a programme to the other groups.

In this example, it is assumed that the teacher knows far more gestures and body language than the learners. The aim of the session is raising awareness; the good fun is incidental.

Communicative intent	English gestures
You're mad!	Tapping temple with forefinger.
That's first class - top hole!	Circle made with forefinger and thumb.
Go away.	Hand flung out repeatedly, palm down.
Come here.	Half open hand waves inwards, palm up.
Yes.	Up and down nodding of head.
Stop!	Extended arm with full palm outwards.
Childish victory.	Buffing up lapel with crooked hand's fingernails.
Childish scorn.	Grimacing to 'Neeh neh neh neeeeh neh!'
Ridicule.	Waving vertical fingers, thumb on nose.
Insolent disrespect.	Tongue a little out for raspberry blowing.
Rude dismissal after argument.	Tongue right out, head shaking.
Would you like a drink?	Wobbling hand, thumb near lips.
Sincere apology.	Open palms, resigned facial expression.

Proceed as follows:

- identify some communicative acts which are realised differently in the target language. It could be one of those in Fig 18 or others.
- record each gesture without sound; repeat each one once or twice, to allow the students to see them and take them in.
- ask what they mean. Experience suggests that this can be too open-ended. To guide the class prepare a worksheet with a variety of choices for each one, such as this:

Gesture D

- ☐ I'm rich now!
- ☐ What a triumph!
- ☐ My heart goes out to you.

Ask the students to tick the correct box. They can discuss in pairs or small groups.

This type of exercise combines presenting language as a model, with providing a stimulus for discussion.

Materials as a stimulus for discussion

If a primary aim of language teaching is to encourage students to communicate, then any materials which animate them to discussion are welcome. The only caveat is that what the learners are prompted to say must be within reach of their communicative ability.

Through the desire to communicate, the learners seek out new words, new structures, new circumlocutions to express themselves. Language first encountered in

this way is easily remembered; after all, it reflects what the student actually wants to say.

In terms of topic and format, the list of potentially stimulating materials is endless. We can consider here four categories of material easily made by teachers, which exemplify the principles applicable to most materials:

bringing material from the country of the target language;
silent sequences;
adding new sound tracks to video recording;
documentaries.

★ Material from abroad

Visits to the country of the target language offer a marvellous opportunity to gather materials. Almost anything can be turned to good advantage: cultural practices, street scenes, landscapes, public service officials in uniform, traffic. When there, borrow a camera if you cannot take one with you. Or ask visitors to bring material for you: and be prepared to do the same for them.

★ Silent sequences

Making silent sequences has the advantage of ease of direction, as mentioned above. Any disruptive sound will be taken away, as a sound track is not required.

What needs to be recorded is material which will prompt discussion, and many of the suggestions for Students Projects are suitable, such as:

- narrative sequences which need an explanation of what has happened (How many people were really in the room? Was that a man or a woman who...? What was taken from the table? Why did...?)
- stories which stop, inviting speculation about what will happen next, or what could happen next if..
- advertisements in which what is advertised remains a mystery
- scenes of people at work, at play
- factories or machinery working
- countryside, farms and animals

The silent sequences can be enhanced by adding a music sound track, as in many documentaries.

★ Audio dubbing other material

This represents a slight reduction in recording activity: recording a sound track only, rather than vision and sound.

There are many materials available on video cassette (without copyright restrictions on use) which have not been made for language teaching, but which appeal to students. The drawback is that the native speaker level of language used is too difficult. Audio-dubbing is a technique to use to exploit such materials.

Make a copy of the video recording, and then replace the voices with a new, simplified sound track (see Chapter 6).

This can be done to good effect with drama. The structure of many dramas is such that a rapid dialogue precedes an exciting scene. For example, the protagonists have a rapid-fire discussion on what to do next (a lot of dialogue), before they rush off for a visually exciting scene (little dialogue). The students need a simplified account of what was discussed - supplied by the audio-dub - so that they can then watch the following scene which is easy to understand.

Documentaries made for a specific group of learners can meet the interests of the group far more accurately than general purpose documentaries.

Survey the students first to establish what their interests are. This can be done with children and adolescents by asking about their magazine reading habits and their television programmes, as well as their hobbies and sporting interests.

Whereas the interests of many young adults will be, in the words of the pop song, 'sex and drugs and rock 'n roll', for many there soon develops an interest in consumer goods, as they start independent adult lives. These interests are usually ignored in published language course materials. Exploit them by allowing the students to record their own sound commentaries onto the professional visual images.

Another advantage of audio-dubbing is that material from any source language can be used, as the original sound track is lost when the students' recording is added.

Conclusion

The camera is a versatile aid for language learning that should be used for more than just recording students and their performance. These diverse uses of the camera mean that the machinery must be understood. The technical advice given up until now is expanded and consolidated in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

Titles, captions and editing

Using a camera to record somebody speaking is an easy task, especially if there are no interruptions during the presentation. But even a simple talk can appear more polished if there is a title on screen before the talk, and a credit at the end. If the presentation includes visual information - such as maps, objects, or overhead projector transparencies - then copies of this material can be spliced into the recording. Captions can also be used, adding a written reinforcement to what is being said.

Editing is the key to a good production. This chapter explains how editing can be done in a variety of ways, depending on what equipment is available:

- editing sound and vision while you record;
- editing using two recorders;
- editing the sound after you have recorded;
- editing vision only while you record;
- editing using an editing suite.

The last item, a video editing suite, is the most expensive single item mentioned in this book. However, as the cost of equipment decreases and the sophistication of teachers increases, this very useful item will be found and used more readily.

The explanations and illustrations in this chapter bring together the technical points made earlier in the book. But before turning to these details, we shall look at titles and captions.

Titles and captions

Titles can be used throughout a recording. At the beginning they identify and inform the viewer about what is coming. During a recording they can mark off sections, as does a chapter in a book, or they can be used to add written information to the visual and aural information already present. This technique is very common at the moment in certain youth programmes on television: rolling captions add to the scenes and spoken commentary. At the end of a recording, they usually give the credits for what has been accomplished, perhaps adding a humorous copyright notice and date - such as MCMXCII to mark the year of European unity.

There are two distinct methods of making captions. If the camera has the facilities built in, then computer-generated titles can be used (see below). The most common types of caption, however, are written or drawn on paper or card, or acquired from some other source, and then recorded onto the video tape using the camera.

Recording titles

The title to be recorded is treated like an immobile subject, rather as a talking head.

Use the usual procedure to get it in focus, and then record it as required for an appropriate time: say 15 seconds for a title requiring only a small amount of reading.

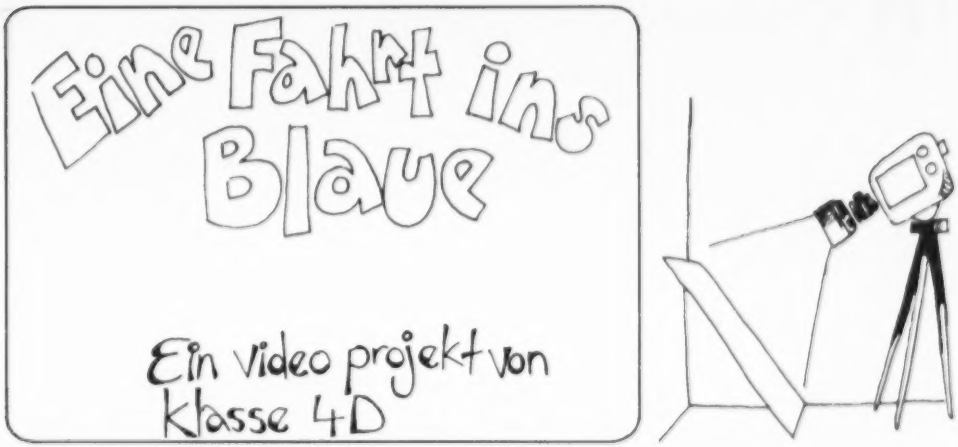


Fig. 11

Be sure that the title is held at the correct angle to the camera (normally 90°) to avoid distortion of lettering or images. If it is impractical to support a title board against a wall, it can be propped at an oblique angle on the floor, allowing the camera to point down towards it at a similar angle (see Fig 11).

Making titles can be creative and amusing, and there are many variations involving more than a placard with a few words on it. Here are three examples.

1 Camera exploration. As a basis for the title sequence, use a map, landscape or townscape, preferably one with lots of details. Start off with a close-up of one detail; to do this from, for example, a tourist poster or a postcard might mean using the macro zoom. This is a refinement of the normal zoom control, allowing objects to be in focus when viewed from only one centimetre away. Having established the shot, allow the camera to explore the countryside or town. In the exploration, the camera will come across written information which you have prepared and stuck on to the original. Alternatively, finish the exploration and draw back to reveal the title information above or below the original.

2 Scrolling. Prepare a suitable text introducing the video sequence. Mount the printed version on a large sheet of paper, so that the camera never takes in the edges of the sheet. Start recording in close-up at the top of the text, and move the camera down slowly. This will give the effect on screen that the text is scrolling upwards. This technique has always been popular in adventure and historical films.

3 Changing events. Record a deserted scene for a few seconds, and then cut to the same scene with objects, people or actions added to it. Hold for a few seconds, and then cut to an even more crowded scene. Continue until the complete scenario has

been built up, adding the written titles where appropriate. Alternatively, reverse the sequence, and denude a busy scene.

Computer-generated titles

Many cameras do not have any facilities for generating titles, but most camcorders do, to a greater or lesser degree. The computing capacity is either an integrated part of the camcorder, or a character generator is available as an accessory. In both cases there is a pad of keys, rather like a very large pocket calculator, which includes the letters of the alphabet and numerals.

The minimum facility is likely to be for including several lines of text and/or the date and time of recording: year, month, date, hour, minute, and second. This can provide a useful stopwatch facility, especially if the project involves some competitive element, such as completion times for model building.

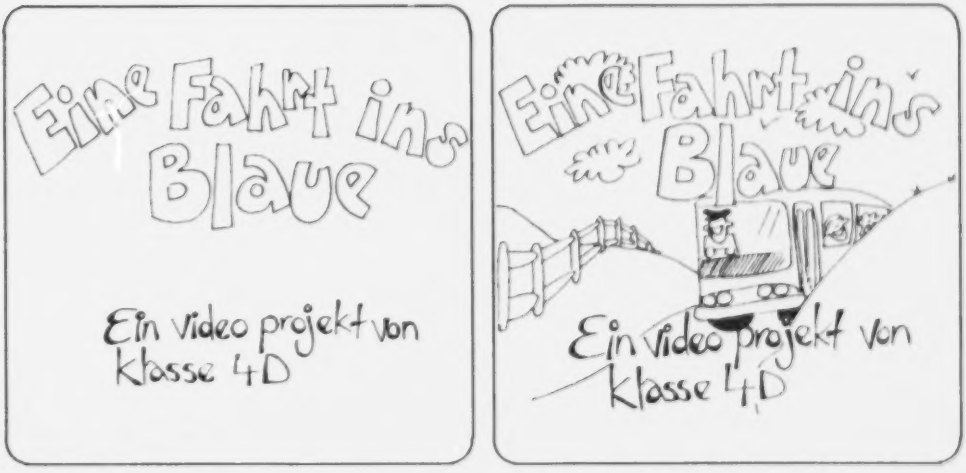


Fig. 12

The text is automatically recorded at the same time as other images, until the title facility is switched off. It appears on the screen as superimposed typescript. If the camera records a blank wall, then the titles will appear against a blank background.

Many camcorders offer a choice of colours for the script.

More sophisticated equipment allows a series of, say, six titles or captions to be entered into a *memory store*. This means that they can be carefully planned and designed before recording starts. Once recording is under way, the titles or captions can be called up from the memory bank when they are required. Such camcorders will also offer some or all of the following facilities:

- both capitals and lower case letters are available;
- symbols such as £, $, *, & or % are available;

- the size of the characters can be altered line by line, allowing headlines and paragraph headings over a text;
- texts can be scrolled up or down automatically;
- complete titles can be moved around the screen to the optimum position;
- titles can be added to already recorded scenes if these are copied to another cassette.

Editing

There are many different ways of editing a recording, and they depend mainly on the equipment and time which are available. If there is a wealth of both, then studio- based editing after the recording can be undertaken. This adds time and costs to any project, but also means a better end product.

However, the vast majority of camera users at the moment just have the equipment which is used for recording, with possible access to a second video recorder. We shall consider editing in these two cases first.

Editing sound and vision while you record

Editing during recording is the simplest technique of all. In essence, it means that you record your scenes as many times as necessary until they are satisfactory. Just as an audio tape can be used many times for recording, so that a new sound track replaces an existing one, so too can a video cassette tape be used. If you record over existing material, that will be wiped off and replaced by the new recording.

Of course during recording you need to check whether what you have recorded is what you want or not. This is done by using the viewfinder as a miniature television screen. When recording, or preparing for recording, the viewfinder is just that: it helps you view the scene you want. However, if a recorded tape is played in a camcorder, or from a video recorder into a camera, then the image will appear in the viewfinder. Note that colour recordings will appear in black and white in this mode, and that headphones are necessary to hear the soundtrack.

Fig. 13

The procedure for this editing is as follows:

1 Prepare for recording as usual. Set the counter to zero or note the number.
2 Record, and stop when the sequence is over.
3 Go back to the beginning of the newly recorded sequence. This can be done in three ways, the first one of which is the most reliable.
3a This involves looking through the viewfinder most of the time:- press STOP after recording to leave the record mode; - press PLAY to set the video cassette in play mode; if the tape has not been used after this point, you will see a blank screen apparently in a snow storm; - immediately use REVIEW (or REWIND); the snowstorm will shortly disappear, and the newly recorded material will flash past in reverse at about ten times normal speed; - at the beginning of the sequence, release the REVIEW/REWIND button, and watch the sequence.
3b Use the memory facility to wind back to zero, and then carry out a check on the sequence.
3c This is unreliable, and is only useful if the amount to be rewound is very long: rewind the tape watching the counter numbers, and try to stop at the beginning. From wherever you actually do stop, proceed along the lines of 3a.
4 If the recording is satisfactory, continue recording from where it stops;
If the recording is unsatisfactory, start recording again from wherever is suitable.
5 Continue in this manner scene by scene until the whole film is completed.

Between scenes, there are a variety of ways of effecting a good cut. Magical effects might mean that the pause button on the camera is used for a sudden change.

Standard film techniques can be used, such as linking two actions. At the end of one scene, for example, a phone rings; another phone is answered at the beginning of the next scene. Alternatively, the camera follows a character's stare out of a window to a new scene; or there is a cut as a vehicle passes. Apart from captions, an easy option is to use the *iris control* to fade out a scene, or to arrive in a scene from a fadeout (see the glossary for more details).

Editing in this way means that all the scenes in a recording have to be shot in the sequence in which they will be viewed. The speed of recording can be very quick, if a four minute take is successful the first time; or very slow if the same take has to be re-done five times. However, at the end of the session, the recording is virtually finished, with perhaps only credits to add. Further, the recording is of the best quality available to you; it is the original, so-called *first generation* version, not copied from a master tape.

This technique is often called on-line editing or assemble editing.

Editing using two recorders

Using this technique, recordings can be made as one wishes, regardless of the final sequence. If there are several takes of one scene, they can be kept on the cassette, and the final editing process can select from them.

In essence, this technique involves transferring to a new tape excerpts from a master tape which has more material than you require. The basic procedure is as follows:

1 Link two video recorders together, using a video connecting lead and an audio

connecting lead; these are easily available from video component shops, if they are not already to hand. Use a television monitor linked to the receiving video to check what is being recorded there.

2 Set the master tape at the first required sequence. Press PLAY and PAUSE together.

3 Set the receiving tape at the required place (immediately after the previous sequence, caption or title). Press PLAY, RECORD and PAUSE.

4 Release both PAUSE buttons. You will be recording the excerpt which is being shown on the television screen.

5 At the end of the desired sequence, press PAUSE on the receiving video.

6 STOP the master tape, and find the next sequence to be recorded. When found, press PLAY and PAUSE together. Release both PAUSE buttons as in step 4.

Repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 until the editing is complete.

This method of editing allows you to choose from different parts of the master tape, perhaps mixing bits of different takes of the same scene. It also allows you to create effects that could not be recorded - for example, a sixfold repetition of a very short action or phrase, as is done in many advertisements or pop music sampling.

The edited recording will be of slightly poorer quality than the original, as it will be a second generation recording.

This technique is often referred to as dubbing (but see audio dubbing below).

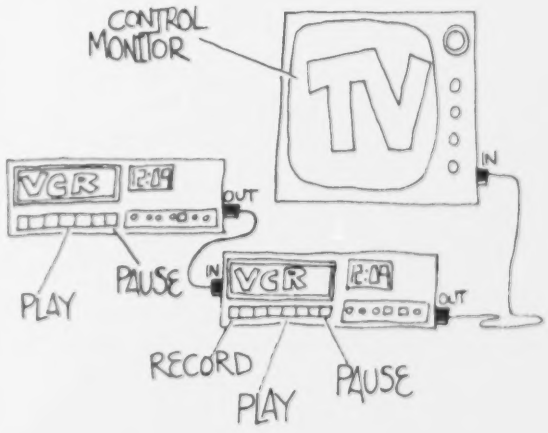


Fig. 14

Editing the sound after you have recorded

The sound track made at the time of recording may be unsatisfactory or irrelevant to the final version, so a new sound track must be created. This is especially true in documentaries with a voice-over commentary, which can easily be added after recording the visual information wanted.

The technique involves dubbing a new sound track on to the video tape, but preserving the visual information. To do this, the video recorder or camcorder must have the special facility, audio-dub. Proceed as follows:

1 Cue up the tape to the point where you want to add the new sound track. Prepare the source for the new sound track.
2 Press PAUSE.
3 Press PLAY and AUDIO DUB at the same time.
4 Release the PAUSE button at the same time as starting to operate the sound source.
5 Press STOP to stop audio dubbing.

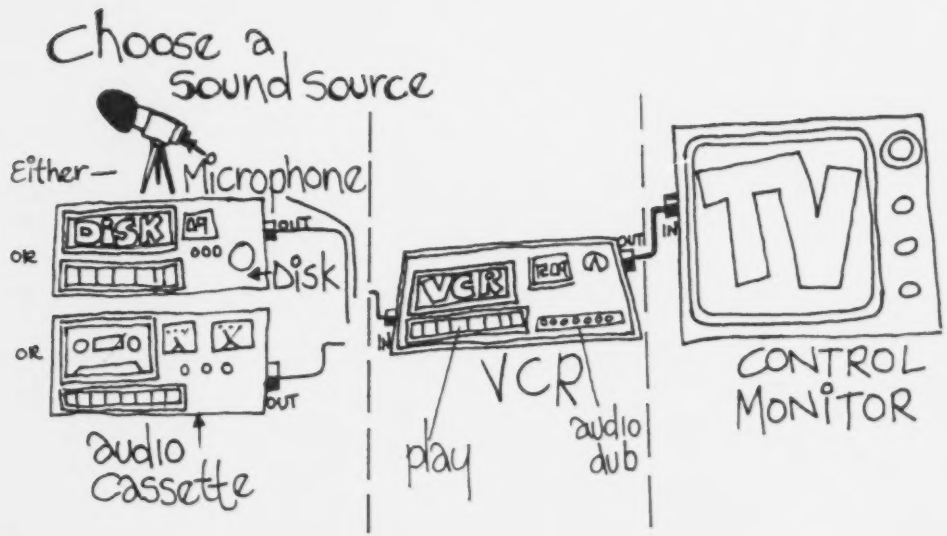


Fig. 15

Editing vision only while you record

This type of editing means that the original sound track is preserved, but new images can be recorded over old images. Not all camcorders or cameras have this facility.

The procedure is essentially the same as that described above for on-line editing (see Fig. 13), but only the visual information is changed.

This type of editing is known as insert editing.

Editing using an editing suite

This is the most sophisticated way of editing from cassette tape to cassette tape.

It is essentially the same as editing using two recorders, as described above, but produces far better results - and costs more money, though not more time.

An editing suite consists of two video tape decks and two monitors, and controls which allow very accurate editing of specific frames: there are twenty-four frames per second.

A basic suite will allow audio dubbing and insert editing. More sophisticated suites have the facility for further operations such as fadeouts and computer generated titles and captions. In many institutions, operating the editing suite remains the preserve of the trained technicians.

POSTSCRIPT

Working with a video camera is exciting and rewarding. Practice, patience and perseverance bring their rewards.

A book such as this cannot possibly teach a reader the actual operations necessary to work with the equipment. That type of learning can only be achieved by doing. Hands on experience, with the opportunity to make mistakes and try again, is essential for everybody, teacher and learner alike.

The suggestions in this book attempt to focus attention on the salient pedagogic points associated with camera work. By combining these with your own experience, you will be well on the way to *making the most of your video camera*.

GLOSSARY

audio dubbing	A technique for replacing the sound track on a tape with a new one (audio), but which preserves the existing visual information (video).
assemble editing	Another term for *on-line editing* (qv).
BCU	Big Close-Up. A camera shot showing the head or part of the face.
boom	A stand for a microphone which has an extended arm (the boom), allowing the microphone to be dangled near a speaker but out of sight of the camera.
camcorder	A video camera with an integrated video recording facility. The video cassette used for recording is inserted into a camcorder, and nothing else is needed for recording. When a camera is used, the cassette is in a separate video recorder, linked to the camera by cable.
captions	Text which is inserted into a recording to add written information to the video.
crab	To crab left or right involves moving the camera sideways, relative to the ground. Used in television, where there are wheeled trolleys available, this is a little used operation in the classroom.
crane	To crane up or down involves moving the camera vertically while remaining fixed in one spot. This operation is used, for example, to create a scrolling title effect with a printed text.
CU	Close-Up. A camera shot showing head and shoulders.
cue	Taken from the theatrical use of the word, to cue up a tape means winding it to the exact spot wanted for viewing or recording. Cue is also used for the facility which allows a tape to be watched as it winds forwards at high speed.
dubbing	Used loosely to mean copying from one tape to another. See *audio-dubbing* and *insert editing* for two closer definitions.
focus	To focus up is to bring the subject into clear view.
freeze frame	A still picture on a television monitor (*see pause button*).

generation	This term refers to original recordings (first generation), copies from this (second generation), and further copies which may be made from them (third and future generations). With each generation, there is a loss in picture and sound quality, which can be severe after several generations.
insert editing	A technique for replacing the pictures on a tape with new ones (video), but which preserves the existing sound track (audio).
iris control	The iris control affects the amount of light which enters the camera lens. It can be used to make a picture fade away to grey nothingness, or to allow a picture to emerge from the fade out.
LS	Long Shot. A camera shot showing a full-length figure.
lux	The unit of measurement for light. Candlelight has a strength of 10 - 15 lux. Good fluorescent office lights are about 500 lux, while department store lighting is about 700 lux. Daylight ranges from one or two thousand lux at dusk and dawn, to 100,000 lux at noon on a clear day. Modern video cameras can operate in all these conditions, but should not be pointed at strong lights.
macro zoom	This is a zoom facility used for close-ups of small objects or details; the cameras can focus from only one centimetre away.
master	The master tape is the one on which the original recording has been made.
MCU	Medium Close-Up. A camera shot showing head, shoulders and chest.
memory store	A term used here to refer to the number of titles and captions which can be held in store by certain camcorders
MLS	Medium Long Shot. A camera shot from head to below knees.
MS	Medium Shot. A camera shot from head to waist.
NTSC	The broadcast signal standard used primarily in North and South America. Tapes recorded on NTSC will not play on standard UK equipment; special *triple standard* (qv) equipment must be used.
noddies	Inserts into interviews, which show the interviewer apparently nodding in acknowledgement of what the interviewee is saying. Noddies are added later.
on-line editing	The simplest technique for editing, also called assemble editing. If a recording is unsatisfactory, the take is repeated, erasing the

previous version. Scenes must be shot in sequence, and the procedure continues until the recording is complete.

omnidirectional — An omnidirectional microphone picks up sound from any direction.

PAL — The broadcast signal standard used in the UK and most of Europe, except France. Tapes recorded on PAL cannot be played on NTSC (qv), and lose their colour on SECAM (qv).

pan — To pan left and right involves turning the camera sideways, while keeping it level and on one spot.

paralinguistic — Paralinguistic features are the unspoken parts of communication, including gestures, facial expressions, and other body language.

pause button — This term is used in two contexts.

Video recorders have a pause button which causes the tape to stop, giving a still picture on the screen - the *freeze frame* (qv).

Cameras and camcorders have a pause button which stops the tape and halts recording. On cameras this button operates the pause facility on the video recorder connected to it, so that the camera operator does have to stay next to the recorder.

review — The facility which allows a tape to be watched as it winds backwards at high speed. When recording, away from a monitor, the tape under review can be watched through the viewfinder (cf. cue).

scrolling — Scrolling describes the movement of text up or down a screen; the technique is popular at the beginning of certain types of film.

SECAM — The broadcast signal standard used in France and many francophone countries. Tapes recorded on SECAM cannot be played on NTSC (qv), and lose their colour on PAL (qv).

silent sequence — The terms denotes a sequence recorded intentionally without sound; or a sequence with sound which is watched with the sound turned off (a useful teaching technique).

stereo microphone — A microphone which records on two channels. It can record two speakers at once, and if the playback machine can separate the channels, it can be used to provide complementary sound tracks in two different languages.

still	A still is a *freeze frame* (qv) on a video recorder; or a photograph taken from a video programme, such as those used in cinema advertising.
story board	The outline script of a video project, showing visual cues, sound information, dialogue or voice-over, as well as details of timings, props, and the like.
superdirectional	A better quality microphone than standard unidirectional or omnidirectional ones.
T = telephoto	The switch used for automatic zoom-in.
tilt	To tilt up or down involves moving the camera towards the ground or the sky while it remains on one spot. This is an essential operation when zooming in on a speaker.
titles	Text which is inserted into a recording to add written information to the video.
track	To track a camera in or out means that it is moved nearer to or further from the subject, maintaining its height and direction.
triple standard	Triple standard equipment - recorders and monitors - is necessary if cassettes recorded on different systems (NTSC, PAL and SECAM - qv) need to be played on the same hardware.
unidirectional	A unidirectional microphone picks up sound primarily from an area similar to that of a torch beam in relation to a torch.
VLS	Very Long Shot. A camera shot showing the whole set.
W = wide angle	The switch used for automatic zoom-out.
white balance	White balance is an adjustment to a camera which allows it to reproduce colours accurately. There are two general settings, one for indoor lighting and one for outdoor lighting. There is usually an automatic setting as well. Under certain adverse lighting conditions the white balance may need adjusting (see the relevant camera or camcorder handbook).
zoom	To zoom in and out means that a subject is viewed in closer or longer range, with the camera remaining in the same place. Zoom in before setting a manual focus. See also T, W and *macro zoom*.

FURTHER READING

The most essential task to be done is to read and understand the instruction booklets which are supplied with cameras and other equipment.

Compared with some technological hardware, video cameras and their operation are explained very well and clearly by manufacturers. Their booklets contain a wealth of detailed, useful advice which could not possibly be incorporated into a book such as this.

For further reading on the use of video in general, the following are recommended:

Allan, Margaret. *Teaching English with Video*, Longman 1985.
This book contains many useful suggestions for integrating video materials into EFL classes. It offers a wide selection of lesson plans which incorporate video.

Hill, Brian. *Making the Most of Video*, CILT 1989.
A companion volume to this, it offers a wide selection of useful techniques and worksheets for exploiting video materials, with examples in several languages.

Lonergan, Jack. *Video in Language Teaching*, CUP 1984.
This book deals with a wide range of classroom video activities, including using a video camera. It is available in Italian, German, Spanish and Hungarian translations (details from CUP).

Revell, Jane et al. *Teacher Training Video Project: Dealing with Errors*, British Council 1982.
This book focuses on uses of the camera in teacher training.

Tomalin, Barry. *Video, TV & Radio in the English Class*, Macmillan 1986.
This book is a useful introduction to using these items of hardware in language classes, and is particularly useful for teachers who feel unfamiliar with the equipment.

ISBN 0 948003 78 2

This is a practical guide for teachers of any language. Its main themes illustrate the different ways in which cameras can be employed, with suggestions and advice taken from current experience. There is also a guide to the technical aspects of video recording equipment and a glossary of specialist terms.

A useful reference manual and resource for teachers involved at any level of language training.

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